



# **INDO-MUSLIM RELATIONS**

*A Study in Historical Background*

*By*

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To my Teacher  
Prof. LADLI MOHAN MITRA  
of  
Bangabasi College, Calcutta  
who wanted me  
to  
write the book  
but  
did not live to see it

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## INTRODUCTION

A modern tourist travelling over India, specially over the northern plains, is struck with the degree of vandalism wrought upon Hindu temples and monuments. Every remnant of Hindu culture and civilization that has survived the ages, bears signs of fury showered upon it by kings who professed the religion of Islam. The temple of Somnath, the Keshava Deva temple of Mathura, the Viswanath temple of Banaras are only a few amongst the thousands that have suffered ruin at their hands. The bigots however were more successful in destroying Hindu temples in North India than in the South and today one has to go to Southern India in order to study the monuments of Hindu civilization and culture.

Ten centuries of Islamic rule in India leave undisputable evidence that Muslim invasion of India was made with the double object of conquering the richest land on earth and winning the glory of effacing idolatry from one of the largest 'heathen' countries of the world. The popular belief that Hindus and Muslims lived in India peacefully side by side and that Hindu-Muslim conflict began from British rule, is not corroborated by history. History of India as told by the Muslim historians in great detail leaves no room for doubt that from the day of Muhammad bin Kasim, the successful invader of India, Islam has offered the original inhabitants of the land only two things namely, Islam or death with the only temporary alternative of a fearful and abject serfdom under Islam till they embraced the new faith. The attack made upon the religion, culture, civilization and honour of the Hindu people by the Muslim rulers has no

parallel in the world. It continued almost uninterrupted through a millenium till the British dislodged them from state power. Efforts were made by liberal leaders of both the communities to come to a mutual understanding and to stop the bloodshed and misery that went on, but the Muslim's hatred for Hindu idolatry stood on the way and ultimately rendered all such efforts futile. The Mian Abdullah incident in the court of Sikander Lodi, narrated in the book, illustrates how liberal Muslims were viewed by bigot kings and other Muslim ecclesiastical doctors of law. The types were Kazi Mughisuddin and Maulana Shamsuddin Turk who had enunciated Shariat's injunctions about the Hindus and blessed Alauddin Khilji's Hindu baiting, assured Mecca's full support to the Islamic campaign for the extermination of Hinduism and declared that the Hindus were "the greatest enemies of the Prophet".

Going through the mass of data on the furious Hindu baiting in India, left to the posterity by Muslim historians, one is surprised to find the strong stamina displayed by the Hindu Society in resisting it. Even after a full thousand years of the most organized State attacks on them made by many of the strongest monarchs on earth, only a quarter of the population could be brought within the fold of Islam. State killing, devastation, economic serfdom, systematic dishonouring of men and women—all failed to break down the Hindus *en masse*. Conversions were the largest on the frontiers of India—in Sind, Punjab, Kashmir and Pathanistan on the West and in Eastern Bengal. Occupation and conversion of Assam was attempted, but Mir Jumla's discomfiture during the Assamese monsoon saved her. The abandonment of towns and cities and the dispersal of the leaders of Hindu religion and culture all over the country in the villages saved Hinduism from utter annihilation. Although political power went out of their



between them for the seizure of the throne, but they were all at one in respect of their Hindu policy with probably the sole exception of Akbar who followed an actively liberal Hindu and an anti-Islamic policy. The accounts narrated hereafter have mostly been drawn from Muslim sources. Some observations of British writers of Indian history like Sir Henry Elliot, Sir Wolseley Haig and Vincent Smith have been added. The writer has purposely refrained even from using his own language as far as possible and have quoted in extenso translations by scholars like Elliot, Raverty, Salim and such others, and has abstained from making any comments in the text with the desire to leave the data for the unbiassed study of the readers. It is essential that we should know the historical background of Hindu-Muslim relations in order to be successful in the adjustment of our relations with Pakistan. During recent times, with the backing of interested Imperialists, Muslim leaders of India and now of Pakistan have levelled charges against the Hindus of oppression of the Muslims, politically and socially. The latest allegation of genocide is the culmination of this baseless propaganda. The following accounts will show that massacre of Hindus, only because they were Hindus, was a pleasure and a sacred duty for the Muslim Kings and Hindu retaliations of a similar magnitude were exceedingly few. Hindu liberalism succeeded in absorbing all the Asian invaders of India into its own fold but failed in the case of Islam. Pages of History, however unsavoury they may be, must be turned with an open mind in order to draw light and inspiration for the solution of our national problems.

## CONQUEST OF SIND

Sir Wolseley Haig, in Cambridge History of India says that the rise of Islam is one of the marvels of history. On the same page he says that "they threatened Christendom almost simultaneously from the east and the west, besieging Constantinople three times and advancing into the heart of France and but for the decisive victory of Theodosius III before the Imperial city in 716 and the crushing defeat inflicted on them near Tours by Charles the Hammer, the whole of Europe would have passed under their sway. The battle of Poitiers decided, whether the Christian's bell or the Muezzin's cry should sound over Rome, Paris and London, whether the subtleties of the school men and later, the philosophy of Greece or the theology and jurisprudence of the Koran and the traditions should be studied at Bologna, Paris, Oxford and Cambridge".

The story was however entirely different for India. By the beginning of the eighth century, the Arabs had carried their arms on the western borders of India. Muhammad bin Kasim, with 6,000 Syrian horse, the flower of the armies of the Khalifas, a camel corps of equal strength, and a baggage train of 3,000 camels, crossed into Sind, defeated the Indian King Dahir and captured the Indian city Debul. The Brahmins and other inhabitants of the city were invited to accept Islam and on their refusal, their wives and children were enslaved and all males of the age of seventeen and upwards were put to the sword. The carnage lasted for three days. A mosque was built there. The legal fifth of the spoil and 75 damsels were sent to the Khalifa and the rest of the plunder was divided amongst

the army. King Dahir fled and tried to check the advance of the Arab army at different points but failed. He was killed in the battle of Rawar. In every city that was captured by Kasim, a mosque was built and an Imam appointed to proclaim prayers in the Muslim fashion. Sind was conquered.

The Arabs had come to India with the double object of conquering a rich land and the propagation of Islam amongst a large number of people whom they called heathens or idolators. Sir William Muir has observed that the conquest of Sind marks a new stage in Islamic policy. The Islamic law divides unbelievers into two classes, the 'People of the Book' that is the Christians and Jews as the possessors of inspired scriptures, and idolators. The first, when conquered, are granted, by the authority of the Koran, their lives, and may not lawfully be molested in any way, even in the practice of the rites of their creeds, so long as they loyally accept the rule of their conquerors and pay the jizya tax, but a rigid interpretation of the Koran, subsequently modified by commentators and legislators, allows to idolators only the choice between Islam and death. At Dehul, Kasim had behaved as an orthodox Muslim but his subsequent policy was toleration except when he met with resistance. Thus we find the zealous Hajjaj, governor of Irak and the General in Command of Islam's Eastern Campaign, remonstrating with the young soldier for doing the Lord's work negligently. *Chach Nama* says, after his first series of conquests Kasim wrote to Hajjaj, "The forts of Sivistan and Sisam have been already taken. The nephew of Dahir, his warriors and principal officers have been despatched, and the infidels converted to Islam or destroyed. Instead of idol temples, mosques and other places of worship have been built, pulpits have been erected, the Khutba is read, the call to prayer is raised, so that devotions are performed at the

stated hours. The takbir and praise to Almighty God are offered every morning and evening." This indicates the degree of zeal that Kasim had in the propagation of Islam in India and the interest the General in Command of the invading army was taking in it.

After the death of Dahir, the fort of Rawar was captured. The women went into a house, set it on fire and burnt themselves. *Chach Nama* gives a detailed account<sup>1</sup> of the slaves, cash and stuffs, which were taken. When the fort was captured, all the treasures, property and arms fell into the hands of the victors, and they were all brought before Muhammad Kasim. When the number of prisoners was calculated, it was found to amount to thirty thousand persons amongst whom thirty were the daughters of chiefs. They were sent to Hajjaj. The head of Dahir and the fifth part of the prisoners were forwarded in charge of Kab, son of Mobarak. When the head of Dahir, the women and the property all reached Hajjaj, he prostrated himself before God, offered thanksgiving and praises, for, he said, he had in reality obtained all the wealth and treasures and dominions in the world.

Hajjaj then forwarded the head, the umbrellas, and wealth and prisoners to Walid, the Khalifa. The Khalifa sold some of those daughters of chiefs, and some he granted as rewards.

Meanwhile the two daughters of Dahir had been captured and sent to the Khalifa. When Dahir was killed his two virgin daughters were seized in his palace. Kasim sent them to the Khalifa at Baghdad under care of his Negro slaves. The *Chach Nama* gives an account of how the girls took revenge against him<sup>2</sup>. The Khalifa sent them into his harem to be taken care of for a few days till they were

<sup>1</sup> Elliot and Dowson, History of India, I, 172-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, I, 209-11.

fit to be presented to him. After some days he ordered them both to be brought before him at night. Walid Abdul Malek, the Khalifa, told the interpreter to enquire from them which of them was the eldest, that he might retain her by him and call the other sister at another time. The interpreter first asked their names. The eldest said " My name is Surya Devi ", and the youngest replied " my name is Parimal Devi ". He called the eldest to him and the youngest he sent back to be taken care of. When he had made the former sit down and she uncovered her face the Khalifa looked at her and was enamoured of her surpassing beauty and charms. Her powerful glances robbed his heart of patience. He laid his hand upon Surya Devi and drew her towards him. But Surya Devi stood up and said " Long live the King ! I am not worthy of the king's bed because the just commander Muhammed Kasim kept us three days near himself before he sent us to the royal residence. Perhaps it is a custom among you ; but such ignominy should not be suffered by kings." The Khalifa was overwhelmed with love and the reins of patience had fallen from his hand. Through indignation he could not stop to scrutinise the matter. He asked for ink and paper, and commenced to write a letter with his own hand, commanding that at whatever place Muhammed Kasim had arrived, he should suffer himself to be sewed up in a hide and sent to the capital.

When Kasim received the letter, he gave himself up. He was sewed in a hide, put in a chest and sent to the capital. Lingering for two days he died on his way. When the chest was presented to the Khalifa, he opened it and called the girls into his presence. Pointing to the face of the corpse he said, " See, how my commands are observed and obeyed by all."

Then the virtuous Surya Devi put off the veil from her

face and said, "Your orders have been obeyed but your mind is wanting in reason and judgment. Muhammad Kasim respected our honour and behaved like a brother or son to us and he never touched us with a licentious hand. But he had killed the King of Hind and Sind, he had destroyed the dominion of our forefathers and he had degraded us from the dignity of royalty to a state of slavery. Therefore, to retaliate and avenge these injuries, we uttered a falsehood before the Khalifa and our object has been fulfilled. Through this fabrication and deceit we have taken the revenge." Walid condemned both the sisters to a horrible death. *Chach Nama* says that the Khalifa ordered them to be immured alive by being enclosed between walls.

Mir Masum gives the same story but he differs from *Chach-Nama* in respect of the death of the sisters. He says that the Khalifa gave orders for the two girls to be tied to the tails of horses and after being dragged round the city to be thrown into the Tigris. Mir Masum also says that "two years after his (Kasim's) death, the people of India rebelled, and threw off their yoke, and only from Debalpur to the Salt Sea remained under the dominions of the Khalif."

Sir Wolseley Haig has rejected the story as a myth. But considering the historical importance of the *Chach Nama* and specially its date, it is difficult to dismiss it so lightly. Commenting upon the *Chach Nama*, Sir Henry Elliot says<sup>3</sup> that "an air of truth pervades the whole, and though it reads more like a romance than a history, yet this is occasioned more by the intrinsic interest of the subject, than by any fictions proceeding from the imaginations of the author." About the story of revenge by the two daughters of Dahir, he says that it is "novel and not beyond the bound of

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* I, 136.

probability." According to him, "the antiquity of the original Arabic work is manifest." "It is evident that the work must have been written before that time (753 A.D.)" The *Chach Nama* has been looked upon as one of the most important original sources from which Nizamuddin Ahmed, Nurul Hakk, Firishta and others have freely drawn their account of the conquest of Sind. It is now claimed that bin Kasim did not meet his death in the manner stated in the *Chach Nama*, but considering the conflicting accounts left by different Muslim chroniclers about the same events, it is difficult to dismiss the authoritative *Chach Nama* account, which is almost a contemporary record, as a mere myth simply because of the appearance of some subsequent account of Kasim's death in a different manner. Even in that case, the fact that captured damsels from India were sent to the Khalifa, the head of the Islamic State, is not disproved.

## INTRODUCTION OF ISLAMIC ADMINISTRATION

According to the Shariat a non-Muslim lived under a contract with the State (Zimma) ; life and property were spared to him by the Commander of the Faithful but he had in return to undergo certain political and civil disabilities and pay a capitation tax ; he was not allowed to wear fine dresses, ride on horse back or carry arms, he must behave respectfully and submissively to every member of the dominant sect ; and he could not be a citizen of the State. He was under certain legal disabilities with regard to the testimony in law courts, protection under the criminal law and in marriage. He must avoid any offensive publicity in the exercise of his faith and must not erect any new temple. For not embracing Islam, he had to pay commutation money (jizya) with marks of humility (Koran IX, 29). This tax has been called by some modern writers a fee for exemption from military service ; but, Sir Jadunath Sarkar points out<sup>1</sup>, the analogy is entirely false because the army of the Moghul empire was a purely mercenary body, and in no sense a conscript force or a nation in arms. There was no compulsion on the Muslim population to enter the army in India and no fine on those Muslims who did not enter it ; every soldier, Muslim or Hindu, enlisted voluntarily, and every soldier, Muslim no less than Hindu, drew the regular salary.

After the conquest of Sind, the Arab Governors fixed the revenues and other exactions<sup>2</sup>. They were bound to pay to the Khalifa the sums at which the various provinces

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge History of India, IV, chapter on Aurangzeb.

<sup>2</sup> Elliot and Dowson, History of India, I, 475-8.



insult. The levy of this impost from those who had not embraced Islam, was considered so important at the very earliest period that we find Hajjaj sending another person to the province to collect it, even during bin Kasim's Government.

According to the original ordinance of Omar, those persons who were of any persuasion non-Muslim, were called Zimmis, or those under protection and were assessed with a jizya or poll-tax at the following rates. A person in easy circumstances had to pay 48 dirhams a year, one of moderate means 24 dirhams and one in an inferior station or who derived his subsistence from manual labour, 12 dirhams. Women, children and persons unable to work paid nothing. But a century had not elapsed when Omar the second, considering these rates too moderate, calculated what a man could gain during the year and what he could subsist on, and claimed all the rest, amounting to 4 or 5 dinars, about Rs. 30 a year.

As the tax ceased upon anyone's becoming a Muslim—when he was enfranchised from his dependence and was invested with the privileges of a citizen and companion—its severe enforcement was often found more efficacious than argument or persuasion, in inducing the victims to offer themselves as converts to the faith. For the professing Muhammadan had but to pay the Tithe for alms, and the import and export duties of one in forty, or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent and he was free from all other imposts; but when the original principles of Government began to be departed from when the once vigorous administration became feeble and degenerate, and the Khalifas appropriated to themselves a large proportion of the revenues which the Koran had assigned to God, the Prophet and his relations, then the Muhammadans themselves also became subject, as well as the protected people, to new tallages and cesses; in

so much that the severity of the pressure occasioned general discontent, and often resulted in revolution and bloodshed.

Hence we find Ibn Khaldun, the most philosophic of all the Arab writers upon history and social economy, thus speaking of the effect of these exactions upon the government which introduced them : " With the progress of luxury the wants of Government and its servants increased and their zeal diminished ; so that it became requisite to employ more people, and to give them higher pay. Consequently the taxes were gradually increased till the proprietors and working classes were unable to pay them which led to continual changes in the Government."

This increased employment of officials had no reference to those maintained for the distribution of justice to the people. In a country where the mass of the nation professed their ancient Hindu religion, there were tribunals for the purpose of adjudicating suits between members of that race, called the panchayets, and the law was the inexorable Dharmasastra codes. The criminal jurisdiction, however, was exercised by the Kings and they had the power of issuing ordinances where the criminal provisions of the Dharmasastra codes were not explicit. Under the Muslims, the application of the criminal law passed completely into their hands. Kazis were appointed to the judgment seat by the Sultans. They professed in disputes between Muslims to decide according to the precepts of the Koran. In disputes between Hindus and Muslims, the same guide was appealed to under which, of course, the former obtained a very small modicum of justice. Public and political offences, whether by one party or the other, were tried by the same standard ; but in all suits for debts, contracts, adultery, inheritance, the rights of property and the like, the Hindus being left without any form of law or any established judicatory to appeal to—had to accommodate



## HINDU RESISTANCE

The march of the Muslims into India had never been an easy walk-over. Every inch of the soil had to be fought out. The agility and striking power of the Arab cavalry against the more imposing but unwieldy elephant corps of the Hindus was a distinct military advantage for the invaders. The inability of the Hindus to combine due to dissensions, specially due to the religious antagonism between Brahmanism and Buddhism, weakened Hindu resistance. Muhammad bin Kasim had stiff resistance from Dahir. Amir Sabuktagin found a great adversary in Jaipal with whom he came into conflict on his first raid into the Indian territory in 986 A.D. Jaipal retaliated by an invasion of the Amir's territory but had to come back defeated. In about 991 A.D. Jaipal made a vigorous effort to ward off the growing Muslim menace by organizing a confederacy of Hindu Kings, including among others the Pratihara King of Kanauj and the Ruler of the Chandel Kingdom to the south of the Jumna. They offered resistance somewhere near Kurran valley but were defeated and Peshawar passed under Muslim rule.

After the death of Sabuktagin, his son Mahmud continued the raids. Mahmud was a zealous Muslim of the ferocious type who felt it to be a duty as well as a pleasure to slay idolators and destroy their temples. He made 17 expeditions to India, almost one in each year. At his second expedition, he inflicted a crushing defeat on Jaipal, carried him away but released him after a time. Jaipal refused to survive his disgrace and committed suicide by fire. He was succeeded by his son Anandpal who continued the

struggle with the Muslims. He organized a league of Hindu kings, including the rulers of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar, Kanauj, Delhi and Ajmer and took the field with a host much larger than that his father gathered against Sabuktagin. They received reinforcements from the powerful Khokhar, mentioned in Muslim chronicles as Gakkhar, tribe of the Punjab. Giving an account of this campaign, Firishta says<sup>1</sup> that the Hindu princes "now considered the expulsion of the Muhammadans from India as a sacred duty. The Indians and Muhammadans arrived in sight of each other on the plains of Peshawar, where they remained encamped forty days, neither side showing any eagerness to come to action. The troops of the idolators daily increased in number and aid came to them from all sides. The infidel Gakkhars also joined them in great strength, and made extraordinary exertions to resist the Mussalmans. The Hindu females, on this occasion, sold their jewels, and sent the proceeds from distant parts to their husbands so that they being supplied with all necessaries for the march might be in earnest in the war. Those who were poor contributed from their earnings by spinning cotton and other labour. The Sultan perceived that on this occasion the idolators behaved most devotedly and that it was necessary to be very circumspect in striking the first blow. He therefore entrenched his camp, that the infidels might not be able to penetrate therein". Sheer bad luck made all this superb organization futile. Firishta continues the story : "Mahmud, having thus secured himself, ordered six thousand archers to the front to attack, and endeavour to draw the enemy near to his entrenchments, where the Mussalmans were prepared to receive them. In spite of the Sultan's precautions during the heat of the battle, 30,000 infidel Gakkhars, with their heads and feet bare, and armed

<sup>1</sup> Elliot and Dowson, History of India, II, 446-7.

with spears and other weapons, penetrated on two sides into the Muhammadan lines, and forcing their way into the midst of the cavalry, they cut down men and horse with their swords, daggers, and spears, so that in a few minutes, they slaughtered three or four thousand Mussalmans. They carried their success so far that the Sultan observing the fury of these Gakkhar footmen, withdrew himself from the thick of the fight, that he might stop the battle for that day. But it so happened that the elephant upon which Anandpal rode, becoming unruly from the effects of the napthha balls and the flights of arrows turned and fled. The Hindus deeming this to be the signal for the flight on the part of their general, all gave way and fled". The Hindus were pursued for two days and nights and 8,000 of them were killed in the retreat. This tragic debacle of a victorious army made organized resistance on a big scale impossible but individual resistance continued.

## SOMNATH

After this tragedy Sultan Mahmud planned to strike at the very root of Hinduism. According to Firishta, in his Thaneswar campaign in the tenth expedition, Mahmud declared<sup>1</sup> that "it behoved him, with the assistance of God, to root out the worship of idols from the face of all India". In each one of his expeditions, breaking of idols figured as one of the most important item of activity, in addition to his greed for plunder. The defence of Thaneswar was broken down, the city was plundered, the idols broken and the idol of Jagsom was sent to Ghazni to be trodden under feet in the street and decapitated. On this occasion Mahmud returned with 200,000 captives so that the capital appeared like an Indian city, for every soldier of the army had several slaves and slave girls<sup>2</sup>.

During his Mathura campaign at his twelfth expedition, no resistance was offered. The city was plundered and the temples were set on fire. A golden image weighing 98,300 miskals in weight and a sapphire weighing 450 miskals were carried away<sup>3</sup>.

The systematic destruction of idols had sent a wave of consternation over Northern India. Hindu faith in the power of the deities in affording protection to the people and even saving themselves from the attack of the infidels began to be shaken. Explanations began to be offered as to why the deities were unable to demonstrate their power and wrath that the people expected from them. In his *Kamilut Tawarikh*, Ibn Asir says<sup>4</sup>, "When Mahmud was gaining

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, 453.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 460-1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 454.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 468.

victories and demolishing idols in India, the Hindus explained by saying that Somnath was displeased with those idols, and that if he had been pleased with them no one could have destroyed or injured them. When Mahmud heard this, he resolved upon making a campaign to destroy this idol, believing that when the Hindus saw their prayers and imprecations to be false and futile, they would embrace the faith". Plunder was only the secondary object in Sultan Mahmud's attack on the temple of Somnath, the primary one was to demoralize the Hindus completely in order to facilitate Islamic proselytisation in India by striking at the root of Hindu religious faith. If Somnath could be destroyed with impunity, it would be exceedingly difficult for the Hindu leaders to maintain their hold on the masses who had already been exasperated through occasional attacks, impositions of capitation tax and a discriminatory treatment as between Hindus and Muslims which held out temptations to the Hindus to end their suffering and humiliation by embracing Islam.

The idol of Somnath was the greatest of all idols in India. On the occasion of the eclipse, the Hindus went on pilgrimage to the temple and there congregated to the number of a hundred thousand persons. Everything of the most precious was brought there. Its attendants received the most valuable presents. The temple was endowed with the revenue of 10,000 villages. In the temple were amassed jewels of the most exquisite quality and incalculable value. Water from the Ganges, several hundred miles away, was brought everyday with which the idol was washed. One thousand Brahmans attended everyday to perform the worship of the idol and to introduce the visitors. Three hundred persons were employed in shaving the heads and beards of the pilgrims. Three hundred musicians and five hundred dancing girls sang and danced at the gate of

the temple. Everyone of these received a settled allowance daily. The idol was cut of solid stone about five yards in height of which two were buried in the earth. The temple was built upon fiftysix pillars of teak wood covered with lead. The idol itself was in a chamber ; its height was five cubits and its girth three cubits. The shrine of the idol was dark but it was illumined by the resulgence of the jewels that adorned the candelabra. Near the idol was a chain of gold to which bells were attached. The weight of it was 200 maunds. This chain was shaken at stated times during day and night to ring the bells to summon a fresh party of Brahmans to carry on the worship. The treasury was near and in it there were many idols of gold and silver. Over it there were veils hanging, set with jewels, every one of which was of immense value.

Mahmud passed almost the whole of his route to Somnath without resistance. When he was near his destination, he came to several forts in which there were many images serving as chamberlains or heralds of Somnath. Mahmud called the deities 'Shaitan', killed the people who were in these places, destroyed the fortifications, broke in pieces the idols and continued his march to Somnath through a desert where there was little water. There he met 20,000 fighting men, inhabitants of that country, whose chiefs would not submit. They were however defeated. From thence he marched to Dabalwarah which was three days' journey from Somnath. Here again the people of the place offered stout resistance, believing that Somnath would utter his prohibition and drive back the invaders. But Mahmud took the place, slew the men and marched on to Somnath.

Ibn Asir gives a graphic account of the fight at Somnath<sup>5</sup> : " Mahmud reached Somnath on a Thursday and there beheld a strong fortress built upon the seashore so that it was

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 468-71.

washed by the waves. The people of the fort were on the walls amusing themselves at the expense of the Mussalmans telling them that their deity would cut off the last man of them and destroy them all. On the morrow, which was Friday, the assailants advanced to the idol and when the Hindus beheld the Muslims fighting, they abandoned their posts and left the walls. The Muslims planted their ladders against the walls and gained the summit. They proclaimed their success with their religious war-cry, and exhibited the prowess of Islam. Then followed a fearful slaughter ; and matters wore a serious aspect. A body of Hindus hurried to Somnath, cast themselves on the ground before him, and besought him to grant them victory. Night came on and the fight was suspended. Next morning early the Muhammadans renewed the battle and made greater havoc among the Hindus till they drove them from the town, to the house of their idol Somnath. A dreadful slaughter followed at the gate of the temple. Band after band of the defenders entered the temple to Somnath and with their hands clasped round their necks wept and passionately entreated him. Then again they issued forth until they were slain and but few were left alive ”.

After the victory, Mahmud entered the temple. *Tarikh-i-Alfi* says<sup>6</sup> that it is a well-authenticated fact that when Mahmud was about to destroy the idol, a crowd of Brahmans represented to his nobles that if he would desist from the mutilation they would pay several crores of gold coins into his treasury. This was agreed to by many of the nobles who pointed out to the Sultan that he would not obtain so much treasure by breaking the image and that the offered money would be very serviceable. In this expedition his real object was not plunder and he replied, “ I know this, but I desire that on the day of resurrection, I should be

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 471-2.

summoned with the words, "Where is that Mahmud who broke the greatest of the heathen idols?" rather than by these, "Where is that Mahmud who sold the greatest of the idols to the infidels for gold?" Mahmud demolished the image with his own battle-axe and found in it so many superb jewels and rubies that they amounted to and exceeded hundred times the value of the ransom which had been offered to him. The fragments of the idol were ordered to be taken to Ghazni and were cast down at the threshold of the Jammi Masjid.

*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* gives an account<sup>7</sup> of how a Hindu had sought to take revenge on Mahmud by misleading him and his army into a desert in order that they might perish there without water. On his return from Somnath, Mahmud wanted to go through Sind by the shortest route which lay through a desert. On his demand for guides, a Hindu came forward and promised to lead the way. After the army had marched all night and next day and time had come round for the troops to halt, although search was made for water, nothing was anywhere to be found. The Sultan summoned the guide to his presence and asked him where water was procurable. He replied, "I have devoted my life for the sake of my deity Somnath and have brought thee and thy army into this desert where there is no water in order that all may perish". The Sultan directed that the Hindu "should be despatched to hell". After marching whole night, the army fortunately came to a place where there was a supply of water. Mahmud's army thus escaped from the imminent danger of annihilation.

<sup>7</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Tr. by Raverty, 82-83.



were old fashioned, based on ancient text books, which took no account of foreign methods and the unity of command on the Indian side was always more or less hampered by tribal, sectarian and caste divisions. Each horde of the foreigners, on the contrary, obeyed a single leader in the field, and the commander knew how to make use of shock tactics, that is to say, well directed cavalry charges which rarely failed to scatter the Hindu army. Elephants on which Hindu tradition placed excessive reliance, proved to be useless, or worse than useless, when pitted against well equipped active cavalry. The Hindu cavalry does not seem to have attained a high standard of efficiency in most parts of the country. Thus it happened that the Muslims, although insignificant in numbers when compared with the vast Indian population, usually secured easy victories, and were able to keep in subjection for centuries enormous multitudes of Hindus. Alexander, bin Kasim, Sabuktagin, Sultan Mahmud, Muhammad Ghori, Babar, Ahmad Shah Durrani, and such other foreign invaders, all used essentially the same tactics by which they secured decisive victories against Hindu armies of almost incredible numbers. The ancient Hindu military system, based on the formal rules of old scriptures, was good enough for use as between one Indian Raja and another, but almost invariably broke down when pitted against the onslaughts of hardy horsemen from the West. The Hindu defenders of the country, although fully equal to their assailants in courage and contempt of death, were distinctly inferior in the art of war, and for that reason lost their independence.

Muhammad Ghori's victory in the battle of Tarain opened the chapter of consolidation of Islam in India. The Turk, Pathan and Moghul Rule of Hindustan began with the Slave dynasty of Kutb-ud-din Aibak. He was a typical specimen of the ferocious Central Asian warriors of the

time, merciless and fanatical. His slaughters were by hundreds of thousands. All the leaders in the Muslim conquest of Hindustan rejoiced in committing wholesale massacres of Hindu idolators, armed or unarmed. Their rapid success was largely due to their pitiless 'frightfulness' which made resistance terribly dangerous and could not always be evaded even by humble submission. This feature of frightfulness has been in evidence, throughout the Muslim rule in India under the different races of Turks, Afghans, Moghuls and Indian converts, down to the present day,— in the Punjab genocide, the Kashmir havoc and among the Hyderabad Razakars. The author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* thoroughly approved of the ferocity of his heroes and we find much the same temper shown in the writings of Badaoni in his *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh* and of Firishta.

## CAUSES OF MUSLIM SUCCESS

The causes of Muslim success in India may best be stated in the words of Vincent Smith, who, by no stretch of imagination, can be considered sympathetic with the Hindus. He says that the Muslim invaders undoubtedly were superior to their Hindu opponents in fighting power and so long as they remained uncorrupted by wealth and luxury were practically invincible. The men came from a cool climate in hilly regions and were for the most part heavier and physically stronger than their opponents. Their flesh diet as compared with the vegetarian habits prevalent in India tended to develop the kind of energy required by an invading force. Their fierce fanaticism which regarded the destruction of non-Muslims as a service eminently pleasing to God, made them absolutely pitiless and consequently far more terrifying than the ordinary enemies that came in India. While they combined every kind of frightfulness to terrify the Indian they were themselves ordinarily saved from fear by their deep conviction that a Ghazi—a slayer of an infidel if he should happen to be killed himself, went straight to all the joys of an easily intelligible paradise, winning at the same time undying fame as martyr. The courage of the invaders was further stimulated by the consciousness that no retreat was open to them. They must either subdue utterly by sheer force the millions confronting their thousands or be completely destroyed. No middle course was available. The enormous wealth in gold, silver and jewels, not to mention more commonplace valuables, accumulated in temples, palaces and towns of India, fired their imagination and offered the most splendid conceivable rewards for valour.

The permanent establishment of Muslim Governments at Delhi and many other cities, combined with the steady growth of a settled Muslim population, necessarily produced immense changes in India. The Muslim element increased continually in three ways, namely, by immigration from beyond the north-western frontier ; by conversions, forcible and purchased ; and by birth. In modern times statistics prove that Muslims in India tend to multiply more rapidly than Hindus and the same ratio probably held good in the days of the Sultanate. We do not possess any statistics concerning the growth of the Muslim population in any of the three ways mentioned, but we know that it occurred in all the ways.

The Muslims were not absorbed into the Indian Caste System as had been the case with their foreign predecessors, the Sakas, Huns and others, in the course of a generation or two. The definiteness of the religion of Islam, combined with its intense hatred for other religions, specially idolatry, preserved its followers from the fate which befell the adherents of Shamanism and the other vague religions of Central Asia. When the Sakas, Huns and the rest of the early immigrants settled in India and married Hindu women, they merged in the Hindu caste system with extraordinary rapidity chiefly because they possessed no religion sufficiently bigoted to protect them against the allabsorbing power of the Brahmans. The superiority of a tolerant Hinduism overwhelmed them but the Muslim, with his Koran for himself and sword for the non-Muslim, stood completely aside. They heartily despised the worshippers of many Gods, with their idols and ceremonies. They kept themselves apart from social contact with the idolators. While a Saka or a Hun or any other tribal could marry a Hindu woman and himself become a Hindu it was not so with the Muslim. A Hindu woman marrying a Muslim, herself became a Muslim, as

well as a Hindu marrying a Muslim woman also became a Muslim. The Muslims, at first, whether rich or poor, regarded themselves as a completely separate and superior race and kept themselves apart from social contact with the Hindus. But in course of time specially during the Moghul rule when a more liberal Hindu policy began to be followed by rulers like Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir, the barrier was partially broken down. One cause which promoted a certain degree of intercourse was the necessity of continuing the employment of unconverted Hindus in clerkships and a host of major and minor official posts which the Muslims could not fill themselves. Another cause was the retention of their old habits, customs and even some religious rites by the large number of Hindus converted by fear of the sword or purchase. Even now their descendants are often half-Hindu in their mode of life. But the most peculiar feature is that whenever a cry of Islam in danger is raised it takes them less than a moment to forget their affinity with the stock of their origin and range against them under the banner of Islam.

## CONQUEST OF EASTERN INDIA

The subjugation of Eastern India was effected with astounding facility by Bakhtiyar Khilji. In *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Minhaj-us-Siraj gives a graphic account of his conquests. Being a bold and enterprising man, he used to make incursions into the districts of Monghyr and Bihar, and bring away much plunder until in this manner he obtained plenty of horses, arms and men. His exploits were reported to Sultan Kutbuddin and he showed him great honour. Being thus encouraged, he led his army to Bihar and ravaged it. He conquered the fort of Bihar with only 200 horses. Most of the inhabitants of the place were "Brahmans with shaven heads." They were put to death. Large numbers of books were found there. When the Muslims saw them they called for some persons to explain their contents but there was nobody to do so. All the intellectuals and leading men had been killed in order to demoralize the masses. Vincent Smith admits, "No doubt everything was then burnt. The multitude of images used in medieval Buddhist worship always inflamed the fanaticism of Muslim warriors to such fury that no quarter was given to the idolators. The ashes of the Buddhist sanctuaries at Sarnath near Banaras still bear witness to the rage of the image breakers. Many noble monuments of the ancient civilization of India were irretrievably wrecked in the course of early Muslim invasions." Those who escaped massacres at the hands of Bakhtiyar Khilji fled, and were scattered over Nepal, Tibet and South India. This event illustrates how the Hindu centres of learning and culture were destroyed at the first onslaught. The massacre of the leading and

intellectual sections of the Hindus had always been an important strategy in the expansion of Islam in India. A ruthless extermination of the leading people had a great demoralizing effect on the unorganized mass and they fell easy victims to the Mullahs.

## ALAUDDIN KHILJI'S HINDU POLICY

State policy towards the Hindus was defined by Alauddin Khilji with unusual precision, without any regard to the laws of humanity. At times he got the rules checked up by eminent Muslim ecclesiastical lawyers. Ziauddin Barni, in *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, has given an account of Alauddin's Hindu policy in the clearest possible language<sup>1</sup>. The Sultan required his advisers to draw up rules and regulations for grinding down the Hindus and for depriving them of that wealth and property which fosters disaffection and rebellion. "The cultivated land was directed to be all measured and the Government took half the gross produce instead of one sixth as provided by immemorial rule. Akbar ventured to claim one third which was exorbitant, but Alauddin's demand for one-half was monstrous. The method of collection was also made exceedingly rigorous. A single constable of the revenue department in exacting the taxes, would seize some twenty landed proprietors, chief men and agents, and administer kicks and blows to them. "It was not possible in fact," says Barni, "for a Hindu to hold up his head and in their houses not a sign was left of gold and silver and articles of luxury which are the main incentives to disaffection and rebellion. In consequence of their impoverished state, the wives of the landed proprietors and their chief men used to come to the houses of Mussalmans and do work there, and receive wages for it."

The Sultan attended no prayers, nor attended the Friday prayer in the mosque. But in respect of his Hindu policy he consulted Qazi Mughisuddin of Biyanah. The first

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1870, No. 1, 8-19.



Alauddin had not a particle of education, did not know how to read and write and never cultivated the society of intelligent persons. He was apparently very much pleased to note that without knowing the injunctions of the ecclesiastical law, he had already enforced the degree of meekness required of a Hindu in an Islamic State. He was fully alive to the fact, however, that this submissiveness had been obtained and maintained through sheer weight of force and was not in the least voluntary. Whenever an opportunity presented itself, the Hindus made a local combination, refused payment of taxes and revolted. Alaumulk, the Kotwal of Delhi, once told Alauddin, "Very different are the men of the present time and age, more especially the Hindus, in whom there is not the slightest respect for treaties and agreements. If they see not a mighty and successful sovereign at their head, nor behold crowds of horse and foot with drawn swords and arrows threatening their lives and property, they fail in their allegiance, refuse payment of revenue and excite an hundred tumult and revolt." In reply to Qazi Mughis, in the course of the above discussion on the subject of enforcing humility among the Hindus, Alauddin said "I have established laws, and made my subjects thoroughly submissive so that under fear of my command they would all escape into a mouse hole ; and now you tell me that it is inculcated in the divine law that the Hindu should be made obedient and submissive in the extreme ; you are a learned man, O Maulana Mughis but you possess no experience ; while I have no learning but a vast stock of experience. Rest assured that the Hindu will never be submissive and obedient to the Mussalman until he becomes destitute and impoverished. I have therefore directed that so much only shall be left to my subjects as will maintain them from year to year in the produce of the ground, and milk and curds, without

admitting of their storing up or having articles in excess".

That Alauddin's Hindu policy had the blessing of the Maulanas of the Arab world, is corroborated by another fact. Maulana Shamsuddin Turk, a very high and learned teacher of the Hadis, came to Multan but on hearing that the King said no prayers nor attended the mosque on Fridays, he returned to Egypt. During his short stay at Multan, he wrote a pamphlet in Persian in which he praised Alauddin's Hindu policy and said "Now the good sides of you are these. I am told that the wretchedness and misery and the despicable condition and the worthlessness of the Hindus are now so great that Hindu children and women will go about begging at the doors of the Mussalmans. Hail, King of Islam ! the protection which thou affordest the religion of Muhammad is such that if for a single act done by thee to the glory of Islam, a measure of sins filling Heaven and Earth be not forgiven thee, thou mayest grasp the hem of my garment on the morrow of resurrection". Thus the King who cared not for his religious observances, nor even for prayers, was acclaimed as "King of Islam" for the sole reason of having persecuted the Hindus efficiently and effectively and was promised safe passage to heaven by holding the hem of the learned Maulana's garment. Exactly this attitude was displayed earlier by Qazi Mughis who claimed that the glory of Islam is upheld by securing the extreme submissiveness of the Hindus by spitting into their mouth. Hindu persecution in India thus had the full support and approbation of the Muslim ecclesiastical authorities who watched this event in India with interest and came here occasionally to inspire the Sultans in this holy mission of theirs.

The severity of Alauddin's Hindu policy had its bad repercussions on the economic life of the country. Finding cultivation unprofitable and even burdensome, the Hindus

lost their interest in agriculture. The bulk of the population tended to become beggars. Ghiasuddin Tughlak realized the danger and tried to follow a liberal policy to the Hindus in order to bring back the economic life into a normal state, restore confidence in agriculture and check beggary. He endeavoured that all his subjects, whether Hindu or Muslim, should be busy with the labours of the field, or other kind of labour and should thrive in it, and should cease from asking charity, and be relieved from indigence. Also he desired that there should be no more begging from door to door, but that the beggars also should find occupation and should cease to importune, and ask for alms, because of their nakedness and want. He desired that every man of every class, throughout his kingdom, should have his proper calling, and should be at ease, and that there should be no more evil or crime or other perplexity. It should however be noted that he dared not free Hindus from the disabilities and impositions heaped upon them *qua* Hindus, but removed only some of the brutal hardships imposed upon them which in their turn hit at the very root of the Islamic state that was sought to be built up by rendering the bulk of the population unproductive and dependant on charity. The refusal of Hindus to submit to wholesale conversions under the inhuman conditions imposed by Alauddin and followed with utmost rigour for 19 years of his reign shows the degree of their repugnance for the religion of the desert which looked down upon the people with a different faith as something less than human beings and the tenacity of their unarmed resistance against the savage and fanatic onslaughts of a fully armed and well-organized State, explains Qazi Mughisuddin's words that "Hindus were the greatest enemies of the Prophet".

## FIRUZ SHAH TUGHHLAK'S PERSECUTION

Firuz Shah Tughlak completely reversed the liberal policy of Ghiasuddin Tughlak and again fiercely started Hindu baiting. Until now the Brahmins had been excluded from the levy of jizya or poll tax. Shams-i-Siraj Afif in his *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*<sup>1</sup>, describes the Hindu policy of Firuz Shah. The Sultan convened a meeting of the learned men and elders and suggested to them that an error had been committed in holding Brahmins exempt from the tax and that the revenue officers had been remiss in their duty. He emphasised that the Brahmins were the very keys of the chamber of idolatry and the infidels were dependent on them. They ought therefore to be taxed first. The learned lawyers gave it as their opinion that the Brahmins ought to be taxed. The Brahmins protested. They also declared that they were determined to collect wood and burn themselves under the walls of the palace rather than pay the tax. When the matter was reported to the Sultan he took their threat of self-immolation as a good news and said that they might burn and destroy themselves at once, for they would not escape from the payment. The Brahmins remained fasting for several days at the palace until they were on the point of death. They clearly perceived that the Sultan was not going to spare them. Finally other Hindus of the capital intervened and a compromise was effected. The jizya for them was reduced to about one fourth of what was levied on the first class.

Sultan Firuz Shah himself, in an autobiographical sketch named *Futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi*<sup>2</sup>, left an account of his

<sup>1</sup> Elliot and Dowson, History of India, III, 365-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, III, 380-1.

policy towards Hindus. He writes "The Hindus and idol worshippers had agreed to pay the money for toleration and had consented to the poll-tax jizya in return for which they and their families enjoyed security. These people now erected new idol temples in the city and the environs in opposition to the law of the Prophet which declares that such temples are not to be tolerated. Under divine guidance I destroyed these edifice and I killed those leaders of infidelity who seduced others into error and the lower orders I subjected to stripes and chastisement, until this abuse was entirely abolished." The following is an instance :—

" In the village of Maluh there is a tank which they call Kund. Here they had built idol temples and on certain days the Hindus were accustomed to proceed thither on horseback and wearing arms. There women and children also went out in palanquins and carts. There they assembled in thousands and performed idol worship. This abuse had been so overlooked that the bazar people took out there all sorts of provisions and set up stalls and sold their goods. Some graceless Mussalmans, thinking only of their own gratification, took part in these meetings. When intelligence of this came to my ears, my religious feelings prompted me at once to put a stop to this scandal and offence to the religion of Islam. On the day of the assembling I went there in person and I ordered that the leaders of the people and the promoters of this abomination should be put to death. I forbade the infliction of any severe punishments on Hindus in general, but I destroyed their idol temples and instead thereof raised mosques. I founded two flourishing towns, one called Tughlakur and the other Palarpur. Where infidels and idolators worshipped idols, Mussalmans now, by God's mercy perform their devotions to the true God."

Again "Information was brought to me that some Hindus had erected a new idol temple in the village Salihpur

and were performing worship to their idol. I sent some persons there to destroy the idol temple and to put a stop to their pernicious incitements to error."

Next he writes, " Some Hindus had erected a new idol temple in the village of Kohana, and the idolators used to assemble there and perform their idolatrous rites. These people were seized and brought before me. I ordered that the perverse conduct of the leaders of this wickedness should be publicly proclaimed and that they should be put to death before the gate of the palace. I also ordered that the infidel books, the idols, and the vessels used in their worship which had been taken with them, should all be publicly burnt. The others were restrained by threats and punishments as a warning to all men, that no zimmi could follow such wicked practices in a Mussalman country."

Even in face of such persecution and State attempt to wipe out Hindu religion from the face of India, instances of spirited Hindus trying to assert their religious rights are also found. No doubt they were brutally murdered as soon as the news of their efforts at a revival of Hindu religion reached the ears of the Rulers, but the courageous attempts were there. Afif narrates one such instance which he himself witnessed in the following words<sup>3</sup>, " A report was brought to the Sultan that there was in Delhi an old Brahman who persisted in publicly performing the worship of idols in his house ; and that the people of the City, both Mussalmans and Hindus, used to resort to his house to worship the idol. This Brahman had constructed a wooden tablet which was covered within and without with paintings and other objects. On days appointed, the infidel, went to his house and worshipped the idol, without the fact becoming known to the public officers. The Sultan was informed that this Brahman had perverted Muhammadan

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, III, 365.

women and had led them to become infidels. An order was accordingly given that the Brahman with his tablet should be brought into the presence of the Sultan at Firozabad. The judges and doctors and elders and lawyers were summoned and the case of the Brahman was submitted for their opinion. The reply was that the provisions of the Law were clear—the Brahman must either become a Mussalman or be burned. The true faith was declared to the Brahman and the right course pointed out but he refused to accept it. Orders were given for raising a pile of faggots before the door of the darbar. The Brahman was tied hand and foot and cast into it ; the tablet was thrown on the top and the pile was lighted. The writer of this book was present at the darbar and witnessed the execution. The tablet of the Brahman was lighted in two places, at his head and at his feet ; the wood was dry and the fire first reached his feet and drew from him a cry, but the flames quickly enveloped his head and consumed him. Behold the Sultan's strict adherence to law and rectitude, how he would not deviate in the least from its decrees."

Such persecution bore fruit and Firuz Shah succeeded in converting a large number of Hindus into Islam. He writes in his memoir<sup>4</sup>, "I encouraged my infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the Prophet and I proclaimed that everyone who repeated the creed and became a Mussalman should be exempted from the jizya. Information of this came to the ears of the people at large and great number of Hindus presented themselves and were admitted to the honour of Islam. Thus they came forward day by day from every quarter and adopting the faith, were exonerated from the jizya and were favoured with presents and honours."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, III, 386.

## TIMUR'S MASSACRE

Abdur Razzak gives an account<sup>1</sup> in his *Matla-us-Sadain*, of a horrible massacre of Hindus by Timur before which even the worst horrors of a Nazi camp would pale into insignificance. He says that when Timur was about to march to Delhi from his encampment at the bank of the Jamuna, "the princes and amirs represented to His Majesty, that between the time of his crossing the river Sindh and of his reaching this place 100,000 infidels had been made prisoners and it was to be feared that in the day of the battle they would incline to the people of Delhi and would join them. Timur listened to this considerate and wise advice and gave orders for putting the prisoners to death. Everyone who failed in the execution of this order was to be killed and his property was to become the possession of the man who reported his dereliction of duty. In execution of this order, 100,000 Hindus were slain with the sword of holy war. Maulana Nasiruddin, one of the chief ecclesiastics, who in all his life had never salughtered a sheep, put fifteen Hindus to the sword."

Timur invaded India in 1398. He needed no formal pretext for his attack on India. The feebleness of the Government, the reputed wealth of the country and the fact that most of the inhabitants were idolators offered more than sufficient inducement to undertake the conquest. Timur rivalled Chengiz Khan in ferocity and cruelty. He was equipped with considerable knowledge of Muslim lore. He died in 1405 when meditating the conquest of China and looking forward with eager anticipation to the slaughter of millions of unbelievers.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, 94-5

## SIKANDER LODI—THE GREAT BIGOT

Sikander Lodi was another fierce bigot. It is related of this Sultan that before his accession, when he learnt that Hindus had assembled in immense numbers at Kurukshetra, he wished to go to Thaneswar for the purpose of putting them all to death. At the proposal of this massacre, one of his courtiers represented to him that it would be better to consult the Ulamas before doing this. Sikander caused the doctors to assemble and questioned the Chief of them, whose name was Mian Abdullah of Ajodhan. This Malik-ul-Ulema asked the king what there was in that place (Thaneswar). He replied "There is a tank in which all the infidels are accustomed to bathe." The Malik-ul-Ulema said "Since when have they been in the habit of doing so?" Sikander replied that it was an ancient custom. Mian Abdullah asked what was the Muhammadan sovereigns who had preceded him had been in the habit of doing. The Sultan answered that up to his time they had left the Hindus unmolested. The Malik-ul-Ulema then assured the King that it would be very improper for him to destroy an ancient idol-temple and that he ought not to forbid the accustomed rite of performing their ablutions in the tank. When this conversation had lasted a short time, the Sultan placed his hand on the dagger and exclaimed "You side with the infidels. I will first put an end to you and then massacre the infidels at Kurukhet." Mian Abdullah said "Every one's life is in the hand of God—no one can die without His Command. Whoever enters the presence of a tyrant must beforehand prepare himself for death, let what may happen!" Sikander's wrath was slightly appeased, he rose up from the

assembly, and all the learned Muslim doctors went with him with the exception of Mian Abdullah, who remained standing in his place. This incident has been narrated by Abdullah in his *Tarikh-i-Daudi*<sup>1</sup>. The Mian Abdullah incident shows the existence of a very insignificant number of liberal Muslim Ecclesiastics, but at the same time it demonstrates their utter helplessness in the face of bigoted Rulers supported by the general body of the Maulanas. Qazi Mughis of Alauddin's reign was the general type.

After ascending the throne, Sikander started his persecution of Hindus with full vigour. He utterly destroyed divers places of Hindu worship and left not a vestige remaining of them. He entirely ruined the shrines of Mathura, "the mine of heathenism" and turned the principal Hindu places of worship into caravan serais and mosques. Their stone images were given to the butchers to serve them as meat-weights. This is specially said of the famous idol of Nagarkot and has been narrated by Ahmad Yadgar. All the Hindus in Mathura were strictly prohibited from shaving their heads and beards and performing their ablutions. He thus put an end to "all the idolatrous rites of the infidels there"; and no Hindu if he wished to have his head or beard shaved could get a barber to do it. Every city thus conformed as he desired to the customs of Islam. In each quarter, prayers were performed in public. He founded mosques throughout his dominions, and appointed a preacher, a reader and sweeper to each; to all of whom he gave regular stipends. He allotted lands to the Hindus who submitted to Islam and "whoever rebelled or was contumacious, was guilty of treason and was either slain or banished"<sup>2</sup>.

Like Sikander, his successor Ibrahim Lodi was also a bigoted Muslim and a 'steady if not bloody persecutor'.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, IV, 439-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, IV, 446-7.



and non-combatants. Firishta approves of his cruelty to unbelievers.

The next important Sultan was Firuz, the eighth one in the line who reigned from 1397 to 1422. Firuz was a fierce bigot who spent most of his time in pitiless wars with Hindu neighbours, "being determined to use his best endeavours in the suppression of infidelity and the strengthening of the faith." He went on an expedition almost every year, forced Vijaynagar to pay tribute, and extended his conquests as far as the apex of the Godavari delta. He married two Hindu ladies, one of whom was the princess of Vijaynagar. Meadows Taylor interprets this event as a sign of toleration and says, 'in religion he was perfectly tolerant of all sects and creeds'. Vincent Smith, however, disagrees and affirms that 'as a matter of fact, he was a particularly ferocious bigot.' In fact, Deva Raya I, King of Vijaynagar was forced to give his daughter in marriage to Firuz in order to save this Kingdom from complete destruction and intense suffering of his people. Invading Vijaynagar, Firoz remained encamped in the south of the City for four months, ravaging the land and taking prisoner by tens of thousands. Deva Raya was constrained to sue for peace and to submit to the humiliation of giving his daughter in marriage to the Muslim King. The Sultan visited Vijaynagar during the marriage festivities but took offence, because, when he was leaving, the Raya did not accompany him the whole way back to the camp. This explains a lot about the psychology behind the marriage. These marriages have been compared by British writers of Indian History with Akbar's policy of marrying Hindu ladies, but in fact they are essentially different. Firuz's marriage of the princess of Vijaynagar had failed to end the hereditary wars between the two kingdoms while Akbar's Rajput marriages ended the enmity between them for three

generations. Firuz had a peculiar liking for having women of different nationalities and countries in his harem. He kept an enormous number of women from many countries, including Europe and was reputed to be able to talk with each lady in her own tongue.

Firuz was murdered by his brother Ahmad Shah who ascended the throne without opposition and resumed the war with the Hindus. He attacked Vijaynagar with a savagery even greater than that shown by his predecessors. Ahmad Shah's main objective in invasion was slaughter of Hindus. He did not wait to besiege the Hindu capital but overran the open country. Wherever he went, he put to death Hindu men, women and children without mercy, contrary to the compact made by his uncle and predecessor, Muhammad Shah with the Raja of Vijaynagar. An account of the butchery was kept. Whenever the number of slain amounted to twenty thousand, he halted three days and celebrated the achievement with banquets and beating of the great drums. He broke down temples, destroyed the colleges of Hindus and slaughtered cows. He sent three great brazen idols to Kulbarga to be dishonoured and omitted nothing that could wound the natural affections, the patriotism or the religious sentiments of the Hindus."<sup>1</sup> These atrocious proceedings enabled the Sultan to assume the title of Wali or Saint. He reigned for 13 years.

Ahmad Shah was succeeded by his eldest son, Alauddin II (1435-57). He renewed the wars with Vijaynagar which ultimately resulted in peace favourable to the Sultan. Firishta notices a curious fact during this war. The Vijaynagar King, Deva Raya II engaged Muslim mercenaries to fight against the army of Islam and even erected a mosque at his capital for use of his Muslim soldiers. During Ahinad Shah's invasions Deva Raya II was impressed with

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge History of India, III, 397.

the fact that the Islamite armies owed their success largely to being better mounted than their opponents and supported by a large body of expert archers. Being unable to train his own army in this way, he tried the expedient of enlisting Muslims in his service and equipping them in the Bahmani fashion. But the experiment was unsuccessful and the Raya had to submit to the payment of tribute.

The next important Sultan was Muhammad Shah III who reigned for nearly twenty years (1463-82). He made an attack on the famous temple of Kanchi. After his conquest of Kondapalli, near Bezwada, previous to the raid of Kanchi, an incident occurred which illustrates the ferocity of the spirit of fanaticism characteristic of the Bahmani Kings. Firishta relates the event in the following words, "The King having gone to view the fort, broke down an idolatrous temple and killed some Brahmans who officiated at it, with his own hands, as a point of religion. He then gave orders for a mosque to be erected on the foundations of the temple, ascending the pulpit, repeated a few prayers, distributed alms and commanded the *Khutba* to be read in his name. Khwaja Mahmud Gawan now represented that as His Majesty had slain some infidels with his own hands, he might fairly assume the title of Ghazi, an appellation of which he was very proud. Muhammad Shah was the first of his race who had slain a Brahman; and it is the belief of the Deccanees that this act was inauspicious, and led to the troubles which soon after perplexed the affairs of himself and his family and even ended in the dissolution of the dynasty." Mahmud Gawan was the ablest of all the prime ministers that the Bahmani kings had and was virtuous but in his Hindu policy was quite as fanatical and blood thirsty as his master. The most remarkable military exploit of the reign was the raid on Kanchi, one of the seven sacred Hindu cities. The remote position of Kanchi, 42 miles SSW of

Madras had so far secured it from Muslim attacks and the inhabitants believed themselves to be perfectly safe. The story of the attack is narrated by Fizilka as follows :

"On his arrival at Kondapalli, he was informed by the country people that at the distance of ten days' journey was the temple of Kanchi, the walls and roof of which were covered with plates of gold and ornamented with precious stones, but that no Muhammadan monarch has as yet seen it or even heard of its name. Muhammad Shah accordingly selected six thousand of his best cavalry and leaving the rest of the army at Kondapalli, proceeded by forced marches to Kanchi. He moved so rapidly on the last day, according to the historians of the time, that only forty troopers kept up with him, among which number were Nizam-ul-Mulk Bahri and Yrish Khan Turk. On approaching the temple some Hindus came forth, one of whom, a man of gigantic stature, mounted on horseback and brandishing a drawn sabre by way of defiance, rushed full speed towards the king and aimed a blow which the latter parried, and with one stroke of his sword cleaved him in twain. Another infidel then attacked the king, whose little band was shortly engaged man to man with the enemy ; but Muhammad Shah had again the good fortune to slay his opponent, upon which the rest of the Hindus retired into the temple. Swarms of people like bees, now issued from within and ranged themselves under its walls to defend it. At length, the rest of the king's force coming up, the temple was attacked and carried by storm with great slaughter. An immense booty fell to the share of the victors, who took away nothing but gold, jewels and silver, which were abundant. The King then sacked the city of Kanchi and after remaining there for a week, he returned to his army." The *Burhan-i-Maasir* adds that the king "overthrew all the symbols of infidelity." Within a month of the raid of Kanchi, Mahmud Gawan

became victim of a plot and was executed under orders of the Sultan which was secured by a body of conspirators by means of a deceit. When it was too late, he found out the deceit practised on him and tried to drown his remorse in drink until he killed himself by his excesses within a year. The dynasty collapsed shortly afterwards.

After the break up of the Bahmani Kingdom, five independent Sultanates of Berar, Bidar, Bijapur, Ahmednagar and Golkunda sprang upon its ruins. The Sultans of the last four kingdoms combined in an irresistible league, at Talikota, to effect the destruction of Vijaynagar, the stronghold of the infidel.

The battle of Talikota, 1565, marked the end of Vijaynagar. About 100,000 Hindus were slain, and the great river Krishna ran red with blood. The ruin wrought on the magnificent city may be described in the words of Sewell<sup>2</sup>, who was familiar with the scene of desolation. After the battle was lost, the princes fled and "then a panic seized the city. The truth became at last apparent. This was not a defeat merely, it was a cataclysm. All hope was gone. The myriad dwellers in the city were left defenceless. No retreat, no fight was possible except to a few, for the pack oxen and the carts had almost all followed the forces to the war, and they had not returned. Nothing could be done but to bury all treasures, to arm the younger men and to wait. Next day the place became a prey to the robber tribes and jungle people of the neighbourhood. Hordes of Brinjaris, Lambadis, Kurubas and the like pounced down on the city and looted the stores and shops, carrying off great quantities of riches. Couto says that there were six concerted attacks by these people during the day.

"The third day saw the beginning of the end. The victorious Mussalmans had halted on the field of battle for

<sup>2</sup> Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, 205-7.

rest and refreshment, but now they had reached the capital and from that time forward for a space of five months Vijaynagar knew no rest. The enemy had come to destroy and they carried out their object relentlessly. They slaughtered the people without mercy ; broke down the temple and places ; and wreaked such savage vengeance on the abode of the kings, that with the exception of a few great stone-built temples and walls, nothing now remains but a heap of ruins and mark the spot where once the stately buildings stood. They demolished the statues, and even succeeded in breaking the limbs of the huge Narasimha Monolith. Nothing seemed to escape them. They broke up the pavilions standing on the huge platform from which the kings used to watch the festivals and overthrew all the carved work. They lit huge fires in the magnificently decorated buildings forming the temple of Vittalaswami near the river and smashed its exquisite stone sculptures. With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes, they carried on day after day their work of destruction. Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought, and wrought so suddenly, on so splendid a city ; teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next seized, pillaged and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors beggaring description."

The pathetic language of the Hebrew prophet lamenting the ruin of Jerusalem applies accurately to the Indian tragedy :

“ How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people ! how is she become as a widow ! She that was great among the nations, and a princess among the provinces, how is she tributary ! ..... The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets : my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword....How is the gold become dim ! how is

the most fine gold changed ! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street."

The failure of the Bahmani Sultans to stamp out Hinduism from the Deccan has been summed up by Vincent Smith in the following words<sup>2</sup>.

"The Bahmani Sultans failed in the atrocious attempt made more than once by members of the dynasty to exterminate the Hindu population of the Deccan, or in default of extermination to drive it by force into the fold of Islam. They succeeded in killing hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, and in making considerable number of 'converts'; but in spite of all their efforts the population continues to be Hindu in the main, the percentage of Mussalmans in the Nizam's dominions and the Bijapur district at present being only about eleven. The origin of that section of inhabitants, as noted by Meadows Taylor, is mainly a consequence of the Bahmani rule, under which large numbers of Persian, Turks, Arabs and Moghuls settled in the country and formed unions with native women. Many Hindu families also were forcibly converted, and the continuance of Muslim dynasties in large areas for centuries has kept up or even increased the proportion of the Musselman minority, Muhammadans being usually more fertile than Hindus. The author cited was willing to credit the Bahmani influence with a 'general amelioration of manners' in the Deccan, but that opinion might be disputed. The monuments of Hindu civilization certainly suffered severely."

<sup>2</sup> Vincent Smith, Oxford History of India, 284.

## HINDU LIBERAL MOVEMENT

While the Muslim Sultans were trying to efface Hinduism from India, Hindu liberal leaders arose with the object of bringing back sanity in an era of fierce religious intolerance. During the period, we find the rise of Ramananda, Kabir and Nanak, all of whom preached the same doctrine of oneness of Allah and Ram and emphasised the need of mutual understanding. But it must be noted that all of them encouraged conversion of Muslims into Hindu fold and reconversion of Hindus to their original faith. Nanak's religion was a definitely proselytising one and several Muslims were converted into it and it gathered momentum under his successors. Sri Chaitanya also followed the same path. Kabir made the most earnest efforts to foster a spirit of harmony between Hinduism and Islam. He was a disciple of Ramananda. Kabir preached a religion of love and emphasised that "Hindu and Turk were pots of the same clay : Allah and Ram were but different names." He expressed his disbelief in the efficacy of rituals or external formalities, either of Hinduism or of Islam ; to him the true means of salvation was Bhajan or devotional worship, together with the freedom of the soul from all sham, insincerity, hypocrisy and cruelty. He wrote :

There is nothing but water at the holy bathing places and I  
know for I have cried aloud to them.

The Purana and the Koran are mere words ; lifting up the  
curtain, I have seen.

Kabir gives utterance to the words of experience ; and  
he knows very well that all other things are untrue.

To the Muslims, he proclaimed——

It is not by fasting and repeating prayers and the creed  
That one goeth to heaven.

The inner vain of the temple of Mecca  
Is in man's heart, if the truth be known,  
Make thy mind thy kaaba, thy body its enclosing temple,

Conscience its prime teacher ;  
Sacrifice wrath, doubt and malice ;  
Make patience thine utterance of the five prayers  
The Hindus and the Mussalmans have the same Lord.

Nanak also condemned with vehemence the formalism of  
both Hinduism and Islam. Thus he wrote—

Religion consisteth not in mere words ;  
He who looketh on all men as equal is religious  
Religion consisteth not in wandering to  
tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in attitude  
of contemplation.

Religion consisteth not in wandering in  
foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimage.  
Abide pure amidst the impurities of the World ;  
Thus shalt thou find the way to religion.

This spirit of toleration started by the Hindus found expression in a growing veneration for the Muslim saints particularly of the mystic school, and there was a fair amount of Muslim response. It ultimately led to the common worship of Satyapir (The True Saint). It was out of a desire for mutual understanding that Hindu religious literature was studied and translated or summarised

in the Muslim court like those of Zain-ul-Abedin in Kashmir and Husain Shah in Bengal. Some Muslim courts and a few Muslim scholars were attracted to the study of Hindu philosophy like Yoga and the sciences of medicine and astrology. Dara Shikoh translated the Upanishads into Persian. Hindu astronomers borrowed from the Muslims technical terms and some items of the calendar and a branch of horoscopy called Tajik. Some Muslims wrote in vernaculars on topics of Hindu life and tradition, as Malik Muhammad Jaisi did on Padmini. It was translated in Bengali by the Muslim poet Alaol. Several intermarriages between the ruling members of two communities took place but these inter-communal marriages, were mostly the result of compulsion as a condition of conquest and did not find favour amongst the general populace. In the political field, Muslim Rulers appointed Hindus to Army command and high administrative posts but it is difficult to say how far they were due to political necessity than to any feeling of goodwill. This fraternisations between the two communities had progressed so much that when Babur came to India he was compelled to notice this peculiar "Hindustani way".

When on the one hand this attempt to absorb Islam was in good progress, the orthodox circles strengthened conservatism as a defence against the proselytising zeal of Islam. With a view to fortifying their position against the spread of Islam, they increased the stringency of caste rules, made untouchability more rigorous and introduced the purdah system as a measure of protection to the womenfolk against the foreigners. Losing their political power, they generally left the cities and went down into the villages, organized the village society and so strengthened it that the proselytising attacks of the Muslim rulers bore successful results only in cities and towns. The only province where villagers could be converted *en masse* were Sind, Punjab,

Kashmir, Western U.P. and Bengal. The leaders of the Hindus perceived that the Liberal movement was confined to a few and was only a short respite. It lacked the backing of the Maulanas and Muslim masses.

The revival of fierce proselytisation during the long reign of Aurangazeb proved that the orthodox section of the Hindus were in the right. The unity drive of Ramananda, Kabir and Nanak was a complete failure. Dr. Furquhar notices this fact and says<sup>2</sup>, "It is a most extraordinary fact that the theology of Kabir was meant to unite Hindus and Muhammadans in the worship of the one God ; yet the most implacable hatred arose between the Sikhs and the Muhammadans and from that hatred came the Khalsa, the Sikh military order, which created the fiercest enemies the Moghul emperors had. It is also most noteworthy that caste has found its way back into every Hindu sect that has disowned it."

The light in which devout Muslims viewed their liberal compatriots' efforts at understanding Hinduism, is amply illustrated in the following passage of the *Alamgirnama* of Muhammad Kazim<sup>3</sup> :

"Dara Shikoh in his later days did not restrain himself to the free-thinking and heretical notions which he had adopted under the name of tasawwuf (Sufism), but showed an inclination for the religion and institutions of the Hindus. He was constantly in the society of Brahmins, Yogis and Sannyasis, and he used to regard these worthless teachers of delusions as learned and true masters of wisdom. He considered their books which they call *Bed* as being the Word of God, and revealed from heaven and he called them ancient and excellent books. He was under such delusion about this *Bed* that he collected Brahmins and

<sup>2</sup> Furquhar, Primer of Hinduism, 138.

<sup>3</sup> Elliot and Dowson, History of India, VII, 179.

Sannyasis from all parts of the country, and paying them great respect and attention, he employed them in translating the *Bed*. He spent all his time in this unholy work, and devoted all his attention to the contents of these wretched books. Instead of the sacred name of God, he adopted the Hindu name of *Prabhu* (lord) which the Hindus consider holy, and he had this time engraved in Hindi letters upon rings of diamond, ruby, emerald etc. Through these perverted opinions he had given up the prayers, fastings and other obligations imposed by the law. It became manifest that if Dara Shikoh obtained the throne and established his power, the foundations of the faith would be in danger and the precepts of Islam would be changed for the rant of infidelity and Judaism."

How the Muslim leaders viewed the liberal movement may be illustrated by one typical incident<sup>4</sup>. It is related in the *Akbar Shahi* that there was a Brahman, by name Laudhan, who dwelt in the village of Kaner, who had one day asserted in the presence of Mussalmans that Islam was true as was also his own religion. Prof. H. H. Wilson surmises<sup>5</sup> that he was a disciple of Kabir. This speech of his was noised abroad and came to the ears of the Ulama. Kazi Pyara and Sheikh Badr, who resided at Lakhnauti, gave fatwas which did not coincide respecting the merits of the case. Consequently Azam Humayun, the Governor of that district sent the Brahman, the Kazi and Sheikh Badr, all the three into the king's presence at Sambhal. Sultan Sikander took great pleasure in disputations on religious questions and on this occasion summoned all the wise men of note from every quarter. Mullah Abdullah, the son of Mullah Ilahadad, Sayed Muhammad and Mian Kadan, from Delhi, all the Mullahs in short, of his Empire,—were summoned to Sambhal and the assembly of the learned

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, IV, 464.

<sup>5</sup> *Asiatic Researches*, xvi, 55.

"who were always attached to the stirrup of His Majesty" were also present on this occasion. After investigating the matter, the Ulama determined that he should be imprisoned or converted to Islam, or suffer death and since the Brahman refused to apostatise he was accordingly put to death by the decree of the Ulama. The Sultan, after rewarding the learned casuists, gave them permission to depart.

## SHER SHAH

The reign of Sher Shah was short but very important. Most of his reign was spent in fighting Humayun, the Rajputs and the Marathas. He was a great statesman and followed a liberal Hindu policy probably because he did not like to alienate the sympathy of his subjects while fighting his enemies. He dealt even handed justice with utmost rigour and impartiality. He built the Grand Trunk Road which had sarais or shelters at intervals. These sarais had two rooms, one for the Hindu guests and the other for the Muslims with separate Hindu and Muslim cooks for them. Although he was liberal to the Hindus, he did not abolish the jizya. He was himself a devout Muslim. Qanungo says that<sup>1</sup> he saw the folly of the attempt at converting the whole Hindu population to Islam by putting their religion under a ban and degrading them to a race of helots. His predecessors had fruitlessly laboured at it for three centuries inflicting great miseries upon them. He healed the wound by following a liberal religious policy. Neither the zeal of his bigoted admirers nor the envy of the unsympathetic detractor could set the destruction of a single temple or image against the name of Sher Shah.<sup>2</sup> Qanungo is inclined to believe that Sher Shah's policy may be called a policy of religious neutrality if the withdrawal of direct pressure of the State to propagate Islam be called enough neutrality according to the standard of his age. But Abbas Khan, in his *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*<sup>2</sup>, gives a different account of the mind of Sher Shah. The author, who was an Afghan of

<sup>1</sup> Qanungo, K. R., Sher Shah, 417.

<sup>2</sup> Abbas Khan, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, Elliot and Dowson, IV, 403-4.

noble descent and whose family was connected by marriage with that of Sher Shah, had the advantage of obtaining information from many of his relatives who had served under Sher Shah. Since the time of Ibrahim Lodi, a revival of Hinduism was attempted by the Rajputs. Abbas Khan says that Sher Shah told his nobles and chiefs, "It has come into my mind that since the time of Sultan Ibrahim the infidel zemindars have rendered the country of Islam full of unbelievers, and have thrown down the masjids and buildings of the believers and placed idol shrines in them and they are in possession of the country of Delhi and Malwa. Until I have cleansed the country from the existing contamination of the unbelievers, I will not go into any other country". This authentic statement of Abbas Khan indicates that Sher Shah, although one of the ablest of the Muslim Emperors, was not really liberal at heart although he maintained an air of religious neutrality. He ruled only for a little over five years.

## AKBAR

Akbar has been claimed as the most liberal Emperor of Hindustan. He was no doubt liberal to the Hindus, Jains and Parsees, but Vincent Smith says that<sup>1</sup> this liberalism did not spring from his heart. It was necessary for him to befriend them because their support was very valuable in Akbar's fight with Islam. In 1582, Akbar announced his political religion of Din-i-Ilahi and publicly abjured Islam. He not only rejected the revelation of Muhammad but disliked the very name of the Prophet. Abul Fazl has tried to make out that Akbar always continued to be a Muslim although it is admitted that he discarded the ceremonial of the Prophet's religion. But Badaoni gives<sup>2</sup> the correct reference when he says that not only Akbar but ten years later in 1592, some important men such as Mirza Jani, Governor of Tattah, wrote their confession to the following effect, "I, who am so and so, son of so and so, do voluntarily and with sincere predelection and inclination, utterly and entirely renounce and repudiate the religion of Islam which I have seen and heard of my fathers, and do embrace the 'Divine Religion' of Akbar Shah, and do accept the four grades of entire devotion, viz. Sacrifice of Property, Life, Honour and Religion." Birbal was probably the only Hindu who had adopted Din-i-Ilahi as his religion. Akbar's new Faith combined the principal features of Hinduism, Jainism and the fire-worship of the Parsis. Akbar ordered people to be buried with head towards the East and feet towards the West. He himself commenced to sleep in that position.

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Smith, Akbar, 215 et. seq.  
<sup>2</sup> Badaoni, Muntakha but Tawarikh, Tr. by Lowe, 314.

A torrent of new regulations poured forth from the Secretariat after the Council of 1582. A few samples of the regulations must suffice as illustration of the Emperor's apathy to Islam :

No child was to be given the name of Muhammad and if he had already received it the name must be changed. New mosques were not to be built; nor were old ones to be repaired or restored. Later in the reign some mosques were levelled to the ground.

The slaughter of cows was forbidden and made a capital offence as in a purely Hindu State. In 1583 abstinence from meat on more than a hundred days in the year was commanded. This order was extended over the whole realm and capital punishment was inflicted on every one, who acted against the command. Many a family suffered ruin and privation of property. These measures amounted to a grave persecution to the flesh eating Muslim population. Beards were to be shaved. Garlic and Onions, as well as beef, were prohibited as articles of food, in accordance with Hindu prejudices. Gold and silk dresses, prohibited during Muslim rule, were declared to be obligatory at the public prayers. The fast of Ramzan and pilgrimage to Mecca were prohibited. The study of Arabic of Muslim law, and of Koranic exegesis was discontinued. Arabic letters of the alphabet were banned and so on.

## JAHANGIR AND SHAHJAHAN

Jahangir loved talking to philosophical ascetics, both Hindu and Muslim, but he did not imitate his father in adopting Hindu practices. Born of Hindu mother, his personal religion seems to have been a vague deism, either that taught by Muslim sufis, or the very similar doctrine of certain Hindu sages. He spoke of ordinary Hinduism as a worthless religion. His Hindu policy may be characterized as one of non-interference and maintenance of status quo.

Shahjahan, however, took a bigoted turn. The policy of toleration followed by Akbar and Jahangir was ended and severe action against Hindu subjects began to be taken. Jahangir had raised no objection to the erection of new temples, which was opposed to strict Muslim law. Shahjahan resolved to put a stop to this practice and gave orders that at Banaras, and throughout all his dominions in every place, all temples that had been begun should be cast down. It was now reported from the province of Allahabad that 76 temples had been destroyed in the district of Banaras. No record of the destruction in other parts of the empire has been preserved, but it must have been considerable.

Since Shahjahan prohibited the erection of new temples, Vincent Smith says "no important building, religious or secular, dates from his reign, so far as I am aware!"

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Smith, Oxford History of India, 421.

## AURANGZEB

Aurangzeb removed all traces of toleration from the Hindu policy of his predecessors which had already been shorn of most of its liberalism under the more rigorous administration of Shah Jahan<sup>1</sup>. He strictly followed the orthodox interpretation of the Koranic law according to which it was the duty of every pious Muslim to "exert himself in the path of God," or in other words to wage holy wars (jehad) against non-Muslim countries (dar-ul-harb) till they are turned into realms of Islam (dar-ul-Islam).

In his Banaras firman, granted on 10 March 1669, before his throne was secure, Aurangzeb had declared that his religion forbade the building of new temples, but did not enjoin the demolition of the long-standing ones. But his own action both before and after his accession had not respected this distinction. When acting as Governor of Gujarat (1645) he had not only demolished the new temple of Chintamon (at Saraspur) but also several old ones. During his second viceroyalty of Deccan he had pulled down the temple of Khande Rao on a hill south of Aurangabad. His first step after his accession was to forbid old temples to be repaired (1664). A little later his iconoclastic zeal burst forth in full force. On 19 April 1669 he issued a general order to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and to put down their teaching and religious practices strongly. Officers were sent to every pargana to demolish the local temples and the governor had to send the report of the execution of the order under the seal of the Kazi and attested by pious Sheikhs

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge History of India, IV, Aurangzeb.

of the locality. The Censors of public morals (Muhtasibs) appointed to every sub-division and city had it their normal duty to go round and destroy Hindu places of worship within their jurisdiction. So large was the number of official temple breakers that a darogha (Superintendent) had to be placed over them to guide and unite their activities. Besides numberless minor shrines throughout the empire, all the most famous Hindu places of worship now suffered destruction : the temples of Somnath at Patna, Viswanath at Banaras and Keshav Dev at Mathura. Even the loyal state of Jaipur did not escape, 66 temples being demolished at Amber. During the Rajput war, in Udaipur and Chitor alone in two months 239 temples suffered ruin by his order.

The work of destruction was often accompanied by wanton desecration, such as the slaughtering of cows in the sanctuary and causing the idols to be trodden down in public squares.

On April 12, 1679 an edict was issued reimposing "the jizya tax on the unbelievers with the object of spreading Islam and overthrowing infidel practices." Government officials were exempted from the tax. A crowd of Hindus that gathered in Delhi, blocking the road from the fort gate to the Jami mosque and appealing to the emperor to withdraw the tax, were trodden down by elephants when they did not disperse in spite of warning. A temperate and closely reasoned letter of protest from Shivaji had no better success. Manucci says, "Many Hindus who were unable to pay turned Muhammadans to obtain relief from the insults of the Collectors....Aurangzeb rejoices." The heaviness of the tax interfered with the flow of grain to the Imperial camp bazars in the Deccan later in the reign.

We have certain figures from which we can judge the comparative burden of this religious impost. In Gujarat the land revenue yielded 11 million rupees and the jizya

5,00,000. In the city of Burhanpur the total amount in 1682 under this head seems to have been over 550,000 rupees. The police were under orders to chastise those Hindus who delayed in making payment.

Similarly the Customs Duty was regulated to put pressure on the Hindus. It was originally fixed at the uniform rate of 2½ per cent *ad valorem* for all, but in 1655 it was doubled for the Hindu merchants and two years later abolished altogether in the case of Muslims. Sir William Hunter says that the firman of Aurangzeb in 1668 directed that in reclaimed lands the True Believer was to pay one-tenth and the Infidel the full customary rate at one-half of the produce<sup>1</sup>.

A third instrument of the policy of luring his subjects to embrace Islam was the granting of stipends and gifts to converts, and the offering of posts in the public service, liberation from prison in case of convicted criminals or captive rebels, or succession to disputed estates and principalities on condition of turning Muslim. Some Muslim families in the Punjab still hold letters patent by which their Hindu ancestors were expressly granted posts as qanungo or revenue inspectors as a reward of apostacy, *Qanungo-i-ba-shart-i-Islam*. In 1671 an order was issued that the revenue collectors of Crown lands must all be Muslims and that the Hindu head clerks and accountants in all provinces and taluks (estates) should be dismissed in order to make room for Muslims. The enforcement of this order was found to be impossible on account of the lack of competent Muslims, and therefore the Emperor had later to tolerate Hindus in half of these public posts. In 1668 Hindu religious fairs were forbidden throughout the empire, and in 1695 all Hindus, with the exception of Rajputs, were forbidden to ride in palanquins, on elephants or good horses, and to carry arms.

<sup>1</sup> Hunter, Bengal MS. Records, I, 50.

Forcible opposition to temple destruction was offered only in Rajputana, Malwa, Bundelkhand and Khandesh, which were remote from the centre of the imperial authority, and even there only when the emperor was not present. We read of reprisals only in the second half of the reign by certain Rajput and Maratha chiefs who demolished converted mosques in retaliation or stopped the chanting of the call to prayer in their locality. In some places the jizya collector was expelled after plucking his beard out.

The first extensive outbreak, during Aurangzeb's reign, of Hindu effort to stand against this policy of persecution took place amongst the sturdy Jat peasantry of the Mathura district, where the local commandant Abdun-Nabi was a bigoted oppressor. In 1669 the Jats rose under a leader, named Gokla of Tilpat, killed Abdun-Nabi, and after keeping the whole region in turmoil for a year, were suppressed only after a bloody contest with a strong imperial force.

In 1672 came the Satnami rising, which by disturbing the Nurnaul district close to Delhi and interrupting the grain supply of the capital, produced a great sensation. These people, popularly called *Mundiyas* or "Shavelings" from their practice of shaving off all the hair, even the eye-brows from their faces, were a unitarian sect forming a close brotherhood among themselves, honest, industrious and earnest like the English Puritans. After the Satnamis had prepared for a war with Islam, a small incident lighted the conflagration.

Khafi Khan, in *Muntakhabul Lubab*<sup>2</sup>, gives a graphic account of the Satnami revolt. He says that they were not allowed to acquire wealth in any but a lawful calling. If any one attempted to wrong or oppress them by force, or by exercise of authority, they would not endure it. Many of them had weapons and arms. At the time Aurangzeb

<sup>2</sup> Elliot and Dawson, History of India, VII, 294-6.

was returning from Hasan Abdal, a strong altercation arose one day near Narnaul, between a man of this sect, who was engaged in agricultural work, and a man who was keeping watch over the harvest. The latter broke the Satnami's head with his staff. A number of Satnamis then collected and beat the watchman so that they left him for dead. When intelligence reached the sikdar, he assembled his men and sent them to arrest those Satnamis. Meantime members of the Satnamis assembled. They attacked the sikdar's men, overpowered them, wounded several and took away their arms. Their numbers went on increasing and information was carried to the Foujdar of Narnaul. He sent a large force of horse and foot to the assistance of the sikdar and to punish and seize the rioters. The Satnamis fought this force also, wounded and killed a great many of them and put the rest to flight. Matters grew worse and the Faujdar set about collecting more men, both horse and foot and called to his assistance the zemindars of the neighbourhood. With his old and new men and with the levies from the zemindars, he marched against the rioters and gave them battle. He killed a good many of them but was repulsed and compelled to fly.

To shorten the story, Khafi Khan writes, suffice it to say that after several fights the Foujdar was killed and the town of Narnaul fell into the hands of the Satnamis. They proceeded to collect the taxes from the villages and established posts of their own. When the Emperor reached Delhi, he was informed of this outbreak and he sent force after force to quell it, but they were all defeated and dispersed. It was said that swords, arrows and musket-balls had no effect upon these men and that every arrow and ball which they discharged against the Royal army brought down two or three men. Thus they were credited with magic and witchcraft and stories were currently reported

about them which were utterly incredible. They were said to have magic wooden horses like live ones, on which their women rode as an advanced guard.

Great Rajas and veteran amirs were sent against them with powerful armies. But the revolters were eager for the fight and advanced to about 16 to 17 kos (32 or 34 miles) from Delhi. The Royal army went forth boldly to attack them, "but the zemindars of the neighbourhood and some cowardly Rajputs seized the opportunity to throw off their obedience and to withhold the Government dues." They even broke out into open violence and the flames daily increased. At last, the king ordered his tents to be brought out. He then wrote out some prayers and devices with his own hand in order to counteract the Satnami magic. The emperor had the reputation of a Saint working miracles—Alamgir, Zindapir. He ordered his magical papers to be sewn on the banners and standards of the Imperial army and carried against the rebels for counteracting Satnami spell. At length, several thousands of the Satnamis were killed and the rest were put to flight so that the outbreak was quelled.

The Sikh sect, which Nanak had founded at the beginning of the sixteenth century with the object of promoting Hindu-Muslim unity, was entirely transformed from a religious body into a military brotherhood in the course of the seventeenth century. Although Aurangzeb's policy and action completed this change, it had begun earlier than his reign and was in fact brought about by oppression on the main element of the Sikh population, namely the Jats. Nanak had mainly aimed at spiritual liberation by means of humility, prayer, self-restraint, searching of the heart and fixed gaze on the one God—"The True, the Immortal, the Self-existent, the Invisible, the Pure" (alakh niranjan). He rejected idols and incarnations as abominations and

denounced set prayers and dead ritual. In fact he made a conciliatory approach to the basic principles of Islam, although he denounced the Muslims of his age as base perverts and his modern followers are bitterly antagonistic to the Muslims. Nanak's successors in the leadership of the sect were called Gurus and the line ended with the tenth Guru, Govind Singh.

Tegh Bahadur was roused to action by Aurangzeb's acts of religious persecution and organized the Sikhs for fighting the forces of Islam. The Emperor had ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and the Guru's agents to be expelled from the cities. He encouraged the resistance of the Hindus of Kashmir and openly defied the Emperor. Seized and taken to Delhi, he was called upon to embrace Islam and on his refusal was tortured for five days and then beheaded on a warrant from the Emperor in December 1675.

Now at last an irreconcilable breach took place between the Sikhs and Islam.

Govind Singh was not a man to leave his father's death unavenged. He organized the sect into the most dangerous and implacable enemy of the Moghul empire and of the Muslim faith. All his thoughts were directed to turning the Sikh into soldiers, to the exclusion of every other aim. He constantly drilled his followers, gave them a distinctive dress and a new oath of baptism and began open hostility to Islam. Thus the Khalsa rose to action. He incited the Hindus to rise against Muslim persecution and severely put down the adoration of Muslim saints to which Sikhs and many Hindus were addicted. This change he was able to effect because most of his converts were Jats, the best raw materials for soldiers under proper training and leadership, naturally fearless, hardy, amenable to discipline and ready to march anywhere and face any danger. Already their religious teaching had knit the Sikhs together

by an implicit faith in their spiritual head and a sense of the closest brotherhood. Caste distinctions among them were abolished under orders of Guru Govind and all restrictions about food and drink discarded. This sect was thus converted completely into a military body obedient to the death to its chief and ever ready to surrender the individual conscience to that of the Guru.

In the hills of the northern Punjab, Guru Govind fought the Moghul officers and local Muslim chiefs. Large Imperial forces were sent against him but were usually defeated. His army went on increasing, as recruits from the Punjab plains flocked to him for baptism. He had to undergo severe hardships and loss during the attacks. At last he had to evacuate the fort of Anandpur and entered the Punjab plains closely pursued by the Moghuls. Two of his sons were slain. He had to flee from place to place like a hunted animal, undergoing many adventures and hairbreadth escapes. His two remaining sons were captured by the Moghuls and put to death. Then the baffled Guru with a few of his faithful followers made his way to Deccan. He returned to northern India on hearing Aurangzeb's death and in the war of succession among the emperor's sons took the side of Bahadur Shah whom he accompanied in his march to Golconda against Kam Bux. He took up his residence at Nander on the Godavari and here he was stabbed to death by an Afghan follower in 1708. With him the line of Gurus ended no doubt, but his parting instructions to his followers had been to make the Sikhs independent of a supreme leader and to turn them into a military democracy,—"I shall always be present wherever five sikhs are assembled." Hence, isolated bands of Sikhs, each acting under an independent sardar, continued to harass the Moghul officers and raid the Punjab and the upper Gangetic Doab almost ~~to~~ the end of the eighteenth century.

## ISLAM IN BENGAL.

Arrival of the Muslims in Bengal can be definitely traced to 1198 A.D., the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji. The exact number of the army he brought with him is not definitely known, but we know that after his conquest of Lakhnawati, he got an army ready which contained 10,000 horses and invaded Tibet. This expedition was a disastrous failure. Bakhtiyar Khilji succeeded in escaping with only one hundred troopers. From excessive humiliation he fell ill, and died. How many of these troopers and infantry were Muslims who came with Bakhtiyar Khilji and how many of them were local people recruited in Bengal are not known.

In Muslim histories no mention is made of any large Muslim immigration from upper India ; and we know that the climate of Bengal was considered so uncongenial to the Afghan and Mughal invaders, that an order to proceed there was regarded as a sentence of banishment. The Viceroys and nobles governing Bengal amassed wealth rapidly and returned to spend it in the luxurious places of Delhi and Agra while only a few officers and private soldiers, having married into native families, remained and settled in their new homes.

In Bihar which came first in Eastern India under Muslim rule, the proportion of Muslims is far smaller than it is in Bengal and although Muslims here are more numerous in the neighbourhood of the old capitals at Gaur, Panduah, Rajmahal and Murshidabad, near which most of the land grants are found, they are far less so than in Eastern and Northern Bengal, whether the stream of immigration must

have been comparatively thin and attenuated. Even near the old capitals the Muslim settlers always sought the higher levels and they would never willingly have taken up their residence in the rice swamps of Noakhali, Bogra and Backergunj. The number of old Muslim families is very small in the East and North Bengal and yet it is there that the Muslims as a class are more numerous, not only than in any part of Bengal, but than in any other part of India.

The early invaders were chiefly Pathans, not Arabs, and yet the Muslims of Bengal who call themselves Sheikhs and claim descent from Arabs outnumber those who profess to be Pathans in the ratio of 50 : 1.<sup>1</sup> The number of Mughals in this province is quite insignificant, but that of the *soi-disant* Sheikhs, is more than twenty times as great as the estimated population of Arabia itself. "Many of the Sheikhs," Gait says, "have only recently begun to claim this appellation. They were formerly known as *Ashraf* in the south and *Nasya* in the North Bengal; the latter word is still commonly used by outsiders though the people concerned now prefer to describe themselves by a more pretentious name." The fact that the speech of the Muslim differs slightly from that of the Hindus is sometimes brought forward as a proof of their foreign origin, but this is really no test. Gait says that "all Muslims look on Arabic as their sacred language and they interlard their conversation with any Persian or Arabic words they can pick up from their Mullahs or from their religious books. The grammar remains Bengali and it is only some of their vocables which are changed. The better educated converts often deliberately abandon their native language." The small extent to which Muslims bulk in the population when their numbers are not inflated by additions of local converts is shown by the fact that in Orissa, the last stronghold of the Afghans in this province,

<sup>1</sup> Risley and Gait, Census Report of India, 1901, I, 166.

whither they fled after Akbar defeated them in Bengal and where they were granted extensive jagirs, the population of Muslims to the total population in 1901 was only 2·5 per cent.

Abu A. Ghaznavi, a leading Muslim of Mymensingh, who had prepared an excellent account of the Muslims of that district and who was a strong supporter of the foreign origin theory, admitted that local converts bulked largely in the total. His conclusion was that roughly speaking 20 per cent of the present Muhammadans are lineal descendants of foreign settlers, 50 per cent of them have an admixture of foreign blood and the remaining 30 percent are probably descended from Hindu and other converts. In another part of his essay, Ghaznavi makes some observations which seem to point to a larger proportion of local converts than the above estimate would indicate. He says :<sup>2</sup>

“Besides the few families of unquestionable foreign extraction there are other families in considerable number who have an admixture of foreign blood in their veins. There are 22 distinct villages where most of their families reside.” According to Gait’s calculation, there were at this time more than 2·75 million Muslims in Mymensingh and nearly 10,000 villages. The writer seemed to be referring only to the Tangail subdivision of the district, but even so the Muslims residing in 22 villages could form but a microscopic proportion of the total Muslim population.

Ghaznavi’s essay was one of the series which Gait collected from all the districts in Bengal when he was preparing the census for 1901. The almost unanimous conclusion of all other reporters in Eastern and Northern Bengal was that the great bulk of the Muslim population was there descended from local converts.

Speaking of the local Muslims and their conversion into Islam, that close observer Buchanan Hamilton says :

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

"Although the followers of the Koran form the largest proportion of the inhabitants of this district (Rangpur) there is little reason to suppose that many of them are intruders. They seem in general from their countenances to be descendants of the original inhabitants."

Beverley, in his census Report of 1872, stated that "the existence of Muhammadans in Bengal is due not so much to the introduction of Mughal blood into the country, as to the conversion of the former inhabitants, for whom a rigid system of caste discipline rendered Hinduism intolerable." There is no doubt that some leading Muslim families in Bengal can trace their origin to foreign sources. It is also beyond doubt that owing to the Muslim law of inheritance and other causes, many families of foreign origin have gradually sunk and become merged in the general mass of the population and that the numerous soldiers of fortune and their followers who once found a livelihood in Bengal must have left children behind them whose descendants are still alive. This however does not in any way account for the fact that there were in 1901 more than 25 millions of Muslims in Bengal or explain their local distribution.

A very fine account of the characteristics of the Indian Mussalman have been summed up by Nolan in the following words<sup>3</sup> :

"The Muhammadans of India differ very much from their brethren in Western and Northern Asia, as well as from those in Europe and Africa. Everywhere else, except so far as sectarian differences divide, the features of the Muhammadan faith and character possess a clean identity ; in India they are so modified by caste, and by the heathenism which holds so tenaciously its position that Indo-Moham-

<sup>3</sup> Nolan, E. H., History of the British Empire in India and the East, I, 56-7.

madanism has a distinctive character. The various inroads of the Prophets' followers were followed by extensive efforts at proselytism ; force, smile and gold were all freely used to bring over the heathen to Islam ; and all were so far successful that multitudes joined, bearing into their new circle of religious fellowship the love, and as far as possible the practice of their old superstitions. The result has been that while the Mohammadan and heathen populations hate one another, and the monotheism of the followers of the prophet is rigid and uncompromising, they yet adopt castes and customs that are Brahmanical and which give to the social life of the Indo-Mohammedans peculiarities of character very dissimilar from those of their fellow disciples elsewhere .... Whatever their general character the Mohammadans of India have lost, they retain the fierce intolerance which they everywhere else exhibit and the desire to attain power as a religious duty, by means no matter how repulsive and sanguinary. Tyrants everywhere they are in India as despotic as the genius of their creed might be supposed to make them, and their history on every stage exhibits them."

## PUNISHMENT FOR COW SLAUGHTER LEADS TO CONQUEST OF SYLHET

Shah Jalal is the traditional conqueror of Sylhet and one who converted the people of Sylhet into Islam. Ibn Batuta also says that the people of the tract received Islam at his hands. The following are the main events in the story of the conquest of Sylhet by Shah Jalal<sup>2</sup>:

(i) Burhanuddin a solitary Muhammadan inhabitant of Sylhet was punished by Raja Gauda Govinda for the offence of sacrificing a cow.

(ii) Burhanuddin appealed to the reigning Sultan of Bengal, sometimes called Firoz Shah and sometimes Shamsuddin, and who evidently was Shamsuddin Firoz Shah, son of Nasiruddin Bughra Shah.

(iii) Shamsuddin sent his sister's son Sikander Ghazi to occupy Sylhet and drive out Gauda Govinda.

(iv) Sikander came, occupied Sunargaon, but was thrice defeated by Gauda Govinda.

(v) When Shamsuddin came to know of Sikander's defeat, he sought out a man of saintly character called Nasiruddin Sipahsalar and sent him to succour Sikander.

(vi) Burhanuddin in the meantime had secured the aid of Shah Jalal and his 360 followers and he joined Nasiruddin at Triveni (near Satgaon).

(vii) They marched forward, joined forces with Sikander. Gauda Govinda was defeated at last and his country occupied.

Conquest of Sylhet did not stand alone. Practically the whole of Bengal, including parts of Sylhet and Tipperah was conquered and the conquest consolidated during the quarter century (1292-1318 A.D.).

<sup>2</sup> N. K. Bhattachari, *Coins and Chronology of the Independent Sultans of Bengal*, 150-1.

## FORCIBLE CONVERSION

Conversion in Bengal has generally been forcible, fear and favour being the other two factors that facilitated proselytisation. Records of forcible conversion attended with persecution and at times even bloodshed have come down to us in the Bengali literary works of 16th to 18th centuries. The most organized persecution of Hindus was that of Jalaluddin, son of Raja Kans, who held the throne for 17 years. He offered the Koran or death and had effected wholesale conversions. He made more converts to Islam during the 17 years of this crusade than in the next three hundred. He came to the throne according to Riadus Salatin in 1414 A.D. It is said that rather than submit to Islam, many Hindus fled to Kamrup and the jungles of Assam and Cachar. The existence of large numbers of Bengali speaking people in the Goalpara, Kamrup and Cachar districts of Assam, i.e. in the border districts of the province contiguous to East Bengal, is an evidence of the large scale migrations that had taken place. These people have settled in Assam but have maintained their Bengali culture.

The drive for forcible conversion had either been taken by the Sultans themselves and when it was not a direct State enterprise, it had the full backing of the State.

In the Mandaran thana of the Arambagh Sub-Division of the Hooghly district where the Muslim population preponderates over the Hindu there is a tradition that Muhammad Ismail Shah Ghazi defeated the local Raja and forcibly converted the people to Islam. These traditions are not confirmed by history but history tells us very little of what went on in Bengal during the reigns of the



a disciple, who lived in the centre of a Hindu village, but could not find the "badana". On enquiry he was told that the Mussalman villager had renounced his faith and joined an outcaste tribe. On his return to the city, the circumstances being reported to the Nawab, a detachment of troops was ordered out, the village was surrounded, and every person in it was compelled to become Muhammadan."

Westland gives the account of Pir Ali, the dewan of Khan Jahan Ali who ruled in south Jessor in the fifteenth century. Pir Ali, whose proper name was Muhammad Tahir, was a Brahman apostate, and like other renegades like Jalaluddin, Murshid Quli Khan and Kalapahar proved a worse persecutor of his original faith than others who were Muslims by birth. Pir Ali obtained Hindu adhesion to the tenets of the Koran by forcing them to smell or taste beef, cooked by a Muslim. These converts are known as *Piralis* and they still retain many of the Hindu beliefs and customs. Some have succeeded to a certain extent in recovering their original caste and have remained Hindus. The family of Asad Ali Khan of Chittagong is by origin, a branch of the Srijukta family of Noapara. Their ancestor Syam Rai Choudhury, was deprived of his caste by being forced to smell beef and was compelled to become a Muslim. The Rajas of Kharagpur became Muslims because after being defeated by one of Akbar's generals, the acceptance of Islam was made a condition of being allowed to retain the family estates.



Court of Justice of Nawab Jafar Khan (Murshid Quli Khan). Kazi Muhammad Sharf, with the concurrence of the other Ulama acting on the injunction of sacred law, ordered the execution of Brindaban. Jafar Khan, not acquiescing in the sentence of execution, enquired thus from the Kazi as to whether he could be let off : "Can in any way this Hindu be saved from the death sentence?" The Kazi replied : "Only so much interval may be allowed in the execution of his death sentence as may be taken up in the execution of his interceder ; after that he must be executed." Prince Azim-us-Shan also interceded for Brindaban, but that too was of no avail. The Kazi killed him by shooting him with an arrow with his own hand. Azim-us-Shan wrote to Emperor Aurangzeb as follows : "Kazi Muhammad Sharf has turned mad, for nothing he had killed Brindaban with his own hand." The Emperor remarked on the report of the Prince thus : "This is a gross calumny ; the Kazi is on the side of God." Till the close of the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb Kazi Sharf continued to hold the office of Kazi."

The judiciary was utilized for the facilitation of conversion. Criminals could escape punishment for murder or adultery if they embraced Islam. This step was considered full atonement for either of these crimes and has been mentioned by Bernier<sup>2</sup>.

In later times this compulsory system was still further extended. The tyrannical Murshid Quli Khan enforced a law that any Amal or Zamindar failing to pay the revenue that was due or being unable to make good the loss, should, with his wife and children be compelled to accept Islam. It was the common law that any Hindu forfeiting his caste by a breach of regulations could only be reinstated by the Muslim Government and if it refused to interfere, the

<sup>2</sup> Bernier, Travels, I, 144.

delinquent remained an outcaste ultimately taking shelter in the ranks of the Faithful.

On the South Eastern frontier of Bengal, a hardy and enterprising class of Muhammadans have been settled from the earliest historical times, and long before the first European landed at Chittagong, Arab merchants carried on an extensive and lucrative trade with its inhabitants, and disseminated their religious ideas among the people. How and when the dwellers on the coast became Mussalmans is unknown, but when Barbosa visited Bengal at the beginning of the sixteenth century, he found the inhabitants of the interior, Gentiles, subject to the king of Bengal, who was a "Moor" while the sea ports were inhabited by "Moors" and "Gentiles". He also met with many Indians and foreigners like Arabs, Persians, Abyssinians and adds: "Every day many Gentiles turn Moors to obtain the favour of the King and Governors." Caesar Frederick and Vincent Le Blanc, who were in Bengal about 1570, also inform us that the island of Sandip was then inhabited by Moors. In the sixteenth century, therefore, Chittagong was a centre from which an unceasing propaganda was carried on.

Whenever Muhammadan rule existed, slavery was developed and during the centuries of misrule and oppression, through which Bengal passed, the Hindus were compelled to submit to slavery as a refuge for their troubles. Bengal has for its encouragement of slavery always possessed an unenviable notoriety, and the Delhi Court obtained, not only its slaves, but also its eunuchs, from the villages of Eastern Bengal. The incursions of Assamese and Mughals, the famines, pestilences and civil wars impoverished and hardened the people and drove them in sheer desperation to sell their children as Mussalman slaves. They were allowed to marry, and their families supported by the master, added to the number of Islam.

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF CONVERSION

The peculiarities of economic conditions of East, North and West Bengal account for the large difference in widely varying proportions of Muslims in these three areas. While in the former two, they are the largest being as high as 85 per cent with a minimum of 60, in West Bengal the proportion is the lowest, the maximum being 55 per cent with a minimum of 4. West Bengal was economically the most prosperous. Murshidabad being the seat of Government in West Bengal, explains the large percentage of Muslims in that district. People in North Bengal were exceedingly poor, they could not even afford to wear cotton garments. A kind of coarse cloth, called Megili, made of cotton and jute was in use in North Bengal down to the time of Buchanan Hamilton. In East Bengal almost everyone had his own land to grow his own food, his own tank for his water and fish and his own house to live in. A small amount of money was earned by disposing of the surplus grain to the non-food producing classes like artisans, barbary, potters etc., which was sufficient for them for the purchase of cotton, cloth, salt or mustard oil. Barter was largely followed. In contemporary Bengali literature, like the Mainamati Songs, we learn that a person who had his means of livelihood assured had a horse at his door. Even a maid servant did not wear ordinary sari made of jute. "Nobody used the path which is not his own and nobody uses water from any tank which does not belong to him." This prosperity on an extreme simplicity of life and an almost self sufficient village economy was disturbed as soon as money exactions were made. The land was fertile, there was no famine and the people

were well off in food, cloth and shelter. Rent was generally paid in kind and only occasionally in cash, i.e. in cowries. There was little need for hard cash which was in very short supply. So, whenever any cash demand was made, there was great distress. In the *Manikchandra Rajar Gan* of Mainamati Songs, we find the following account : "An East Bengal man with a long beard came to administer the territory under Raja Manikchandra and imposed an exorbitant rent. From a budi and a half this man increased the rent to fifteen gandas. To meet the demands of rent, people sold everything including the plough, plough share and the yoke. Even this being insufficient to meet the exactions the children were sold. The widows and the poor suffered terribly. As a result, some of the arable lands became jungles."

Kavikankan Mukundaram, in his *Chandikavya* has portrayed a type character in Muhammad Sharif, a local revenue officer, in the following words :

"As a result of the sin of the people Muhammad Sharif was appointed Revenue officer of the Pargana under the Governorship of Raja Mausingha. He was an enemy of Brahmins and Vaishnavas and greatly oppressed the traders. He made arbitrary measurements of land and fixed a kuda at 15 cottahs. He turned a deaf ear to the protests of the peasants. The sarkar who measured the land, became a menace to the people and exacted cloths as bribe. The moneylenders became a terror like death ; for each rupee lent they deducted a discount of two and a half annas and charged an interest of one pie a day. The revenue officer had no sympathy for the people, he was concerned only with the collections. The consternation was so great that even paddy and cow had no buyer. The landlord Gopinath Nandy was put in prison and had no means of escape. Constables were posted at every cottage door in order to prevent

tax evasions by leaving the place. The distress was acute, the people sold their axes and household utensils. Things worth a rupee were sold for ten annas."

The poorer sections of the people were the worst sufferers. Acceptance of Islam was irresistible for many under such conditions as it meant their recognition as a separate and favoured class which put an end to many of the discriminations that led to enormous sufferings. A scientific testimony of the local conversion theory is that afforded by the exact measurements carried out by Risley. The average Cephalic Index (proportion of breadth of head to length) of 185 Muslims of East Bengal was found to be almost identical with that of 67 Chandals. The nasal index (proportion of breadth of nose to height) of the Muslims was greater than that of the Chandals but not very different from that of the Chandal's half-brothers, the Pods. These measurements show that foreign element amongst the Muslims of East Bengal is very small. Agreeing with Risley, Gait comes to the conclusion that there can be no doubt as to the local origin of most of the Mohammadans of East and North Bengal. In other parts of the province also the general opinion is that the lower classes of Mohommadans are recruited mainly from local converts.

As regards the classes from which converts chiefly came the affinities of the Muslims of East Bengal seemed to be with the Namasudras and Pods and those of North Bengal with the Rajbansis and Koches. The conclusion is based not only on their striking physical resemblance to their neighbours, but also on the fact that the proportion of Hindus of other castes (in these parts of the country) is and always has been very small. The main castes are the Rajbansis (including Koches) in North Bengal and the Namasudras and other castes of non-Aryan origin in East Bengal, so that if the different groups yielded converts in

different proportions the absolute number of converts from such castes would be much greater than from others.

The property factor explains to a large extent the very small incidence in the number of converts from higher caste Hindus. They were better able to resist the organized onslaughts on their religion. Sometimes they organized themselves and fought the menace, and when defeated fled from the country. With the State power gone out of their hands and the entire Hindu society and religion in danger, they erected a terrible barrier around them by contracting themselves as if within a shell and imposing social disabilities on those who came into closer and more intimate contacts with the Muslim. It seems possible that the *Kurmavatar* theory and the declaration of the Muslims as pariahs has a deeper significance and represents more an eagerness for self-preservation than an expression of hatred for a section of people professing a particular religion. The tolerance of Hinduism for other religions is proverbial. The acceptance of Buddha, the greatest rebel against Brahmanical Hinduism, as an Avatar, speaks a lot of Hindu tolerance. Scythians, Huns, Yue-Chi Chinese had come to India as invaders but all of them have been merged into the Hindu Society. The only people that could not be absorbed even through millenium of association are the Muslims, and it is natural that the exasperated Hindu social and religious leaders would find it necessary to evolve the *Kurmavatar* theory for self-protection.

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## HINDU RESISTANCE AT PROSELYTIZATION

Some accounts of Hindu resistance to the conversion movement have come down to us. Of them, the attempts of Raja Danuj Ray, Raja Kans Narayan and Sri Chaitanya are the most important.

From 1202 to 1281 A.D. North Bengal and part of West Bengal was held in a sort of military occupation. Ghiasuddin Balban, Sultan of Delhi, had to negotiate with Danuj Ray, the Hindu chief of Sunargaon in order to prevent the rebel Bengal Governor Tughril's escape by river. But things began to change with the accession of Nasiruddin, son of Balban, as the Nawab of Bengal. The Muhammadans began to spread in all directions. Militant Fakirs began actively to preach Islam. The petty Hindu chieftains all over the country naturally opposed the Muhammadan aggression and went down one by one. Their defeats were at the hands of the Muhammadan freelance Mullahs who carried on proselytization with the full backing of the State Power.

The famous autobiographical lines of poet Krittivas has the following<sup>1</sup> : "Formerly, there was a Maharaja Vedanuja by name (in Vanga). His courtier was Narasimha Ojha. Calamity befell Vanga and all men lost peace. The Ojha fled from Vanga and came to the banks of the Ganges."

Bhattachari says<sup>2</sup> : "There has been much speculation as to who this Vedanuja might be and whether he might be identical with Danuj Ray of Sunargaon who met Balban.

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Roy, History of Dacca (in Bengali) II, 437.

<sup>2</sup> N. K. Bhattachari, Coins and Chronology of the Independent Sultans of Bengal, 152-3.

I am inclined to identify him with Danuj Ray of Sunargaon, (Vanga denoted East Bengal, particularly Dacca Division in those days) as the sequence of events suits him very well. MM. Haraprasad Sastri informs me that in his last trip to Nepal (May 1922) he paid a visit to the shrine of Vajrayogini near Kathmandu. The priests told him that one Ananda Vajra had fled with this image of Vajrayogini from Vanga about six hundred years ago, to save it from the hands of iconoclasts and had deposited it in its present shrine in Nepal. The Mahamahopadhyaya is inclined to believe that this image had its original shrine in the well known and markedly Buddhistic village of Vajrayogini in the Vikrampur Pargana of the Dacca district. This is very probable. This also fits in well with the evidence deducible from other sources regarding the political condition of East Bengal in the beginning of the 14th century A.D. Danuj Ray, who was powerful enough to negotiate with Balban, is no more heard of after 1281 A.D. Sylhet is conquered in 1303-4 A.D. Sikander Ghazi, who was sent to chastize Gauda Govinda of Sylhet, must have begun by reducing Sunargaon, as any man of ordinary sense would do."

Riadus Salatin says\* that "Rajah Kans a Hindu Zemindar, subjugating the whole kingdom of Bengal, seated himself on the throne and commenced oppressions and seeking to destroy the Mussalmans, slew many of their learned and holy men. His aim was to extirpate Islam from his dominions." Westmacott identified Raja Kans with Raja Ganesh of Dinajpur but Blochman identifies him with Raja Kans Narayan of Tahirpur which is included in Bhathuria. Riaz gives the best account of Rajah Kans, perhaps based on local traditions and clearly states that he was zemindar of Bhathuria. About the identification of Bhathuria, Blochman says :

\* Tr. by Salim, 113-7

"The name of Bhaturiah does not occur in the Ain, nor have I seen it before the time of Rennell's Atlas (1778), in which the name of Bhaturiah is given to a large district east of Maldah, bounded in the west by the Mahananda river and the Punarbhaba, its tributary, in the south by the left bank of the Ganges, in the east by the Karataya, and in the north by Dinajpur and Ghoraghata. Bhaturiah therefore is the district to both sides of the Atrai river". He finally identifies Bhaturiah as part of old Barendra, in Rajshahi proper, between Amrul and Bagura, and signifying Northern Rajshahi proper including Tahirpur. Blochman also considers that the name of "Rajshahi" is connected with Rajah Kans, who was a Raja-Shah, that is a Hindu Rajah who had ascended a Mussalman throne.

Whether he was Raja Kans or Raja Ganesh, from the Riaz it appears that he had been trying to effect the coup for a pretty long time. Riaz attributes the death of Giasuddin, son of Sikandar Shah in 1377 to "the stratagems of Rajah Kans, who was a zemindar in that part" and says that due to the stratagems, "the king was treacherously killed." Giasuddin's son Saifuddin, styling him as Sultan-us-Saltain, reigned for ten years and was succeeded by his son Shamsuddin who reigned for three years four months and six days. He died in 1390. The cause of Saifuddin's death is not known but about Shamsuddin the Riaz clearly says, "And the true account is that Rajah Kans who was Zemindar of Bhaturiah attacking him, slew him and usurped the throne." According to the testimony of the coins, Rajah Kans reigned from 1407 to 1414 A.D. Bhattacharji identifies Kans with Raja Ganesh and says that Danujmarddanadeva and Raja Ganesh must have been the same person.

Rajah Kans seems to have started his anti-Islam campaign as soon as he ascended the throne. Riaz says that

Sheikh Badrul Islam, the then greatest Maulana of Bengal, was killed and the rest of the learned that very day were placed on a boat and drowned in the river. The Muslim saint Nur Qutab-ul-Alam was alarmed at this anti-Islamic campaign. He sent the following letter to Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi of Jaunpur in Bihar who was then a very powerful Muslim monarch and invited him to invade Bengal to save Muslims from extermination:

"The ruler of this country, named Kans, is an infidel. He is committing oppressions and shedding blood. He has killed many of the learned and holy men and destroyed them. At present he is aiming to kill the remainder of the Mussalmans and to extirpate Islam from his country. Since to help and protect Mussalmans is a duty incumbent on Muslim Sovereigns, accordingly I intrude on your valuable time with these few lines. I pray for your auspicious arrival here, for the sake of residents of this country, and also in order to oblige me, so that Mussalmans may be rescued from the oppressive load of this tyrant." Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi ordered invasion.

Rajah Kans, on hearing this news played a stratagem and approached Nur Qutab-ul-Alam to mediate and prevent the attack. It was agreed that Kans would abdicate forthwith and his son Jadu, being converted into Islam, would succeed him on the throne. Accordingly Jadu was converted and proclaimed King as Sultan Jalaluddin. The position was now this, that a jihad is enjoined against an infidel and not against a Muslim king. So, Ibrahim Sharqi, who had advanced to Bengal had to go back. He was very much disgusted at this episode and died shortly afterwards.

On hearing that Sultan Sharqi had died, Kans displaced Jalaluddin and again ascended the throne. He tried his best to reconvert his son, but the boy stubbornly refused

and remained a Muslim. Riaz says, "Rajah Kans again unfurling the standard of misbehaviour, attempted to destroy and extirpate Muhammadans. In short, Rajah Kans extending more than before his oppressions and cruelties, gradually oppressed the servants and dependants of the Saint (Nur Qutab) himself, plundered their effects and chattels, imprisoned Sheikh Anwar son of the Saint and Sheikh Zahid (nephew of the Saint).

After the death of Kans, in which Jadu is said to have had a hand, his work was completely undone by his son. Jadu took his conversion, which his father wanted to be only temporary and strategic, most seriously into heart and refused to be reconverted. The Brahman priests had agreed to take him back into Hindu Society. According to their injunctions, after the death of Ibrahim Sharqi, Rajah Kans had made several gold figures of cows, shoved in Jadu through their mouths and pulled him out by their buttock sides and then distributed the gold of these cow-figures among the Brahmins. The Brahmins gave their verdict that Jadu had been reconverted but the boy himself did not agree and stuck to his new faith. As soon as he ascended the throne after his father's death, his first task was to catch hold of those Brahmins and make them eat beef. During his seventeen years of reign, Jadu forcibly converted the largest number of Hindus into Islam that had ever been done by any Muslim ruler. The most peculiar feature in the history of Islamic expansion in Bengal is that the largest number of conversions into Islam have been made by those two rulers who were born Hindus and were themselves converts. They were Jalaluddin and Murshid Quli Khan.

The attempt to exterminate Islam in Bengal was a direct reaction to the terrible methods of forcible conversion followed by the Muslims. During the reign of Hossain

Shah, in the first quarter of the 16th century, this serious conflict of conversion and reconversion through bloodshed practically came to an end. Probably it was realized that killing and terrorization were not enough to convert the entire people of the province into the new Faith or to exterminate Muslims from the province. During Hossain Shah's reign, some amount of tolerance attempted. His reign may be compared in many respects with Humayun or Akbar's reign.

The most notable feature of this period is the reconversion movement launched by Sri Chaitanya. He followed generally the path of love, peace and fraternity, but had no objection to a show of force in order to demoralize the Kazis. Although Hossain Shah had been preaching and practising tolerance in his Court, conflicts and riots were not infrequent in the countryside. Bijay Gupta gives the following story in his *Manasamangal* :

"The story of Hasan and Huseyn—In the south, near the village of Hasenhati, there lived two Muslim brothers named Hasan and Huseyn, both of whom were notorious. They were Kazi's men and detested the Hindus. Whatever person they find with Tulsi on his head (i.e. a Hindu), they seize hold of him and binding him hand and neck take him to the Kazi. There they fell him on the ground and rain blows on the person as if a big hail-storm came upon him. Slaps and blows on the neck are also not spared. There is a third man named Dula Haldar. He was Huseyn's brother-in-law and was very proud of that relation. He preceded Huseyn in his menacing anti-Hindu campaigns and the Hindus fled as soon as they saw him. Whenever a peon or a policeman of the Sultan's Government find a Brahman with his sacred thread on his shoulders, he is immediately arrested and bound by his neck. They are very glad if they can get hold of a Brahman; they fear off his sacred

thread and spit into his mouth. The Brahmans and the gentlefolk lived in terror. Hindus, out of fear, ceased cleansing the walls and courtyards of their homes with cowdung as it would at once indicate that it was a Hindu household." The story is rather long, the portion reproduced here is sufficiently indicative of what was going on.

Bansidas, in his *Manasamangal*, corroborates this story as follows :

"When the Kazi learnt that some Hindu milkmen had gathered in a place to worship the Goddess Manasa, he called out his men and proceeded to the scene. Three lakhs of Khojas (eunuchs) accompanied him at his call. The whole town became terrified, not a single Muslim remained indoors. This huge army of Muslims appeared at the scene of the worship and the Hindus were almost half dead at this sight. Some of them succeeded in fleeing, others were struck down on the ground. The equipments gathered there for worship were broken to pieces and the sacred things were trampled upon. Kalma (the Islamic formula of conversion) was read into the ears of the Brahmans and all the Hindus present there were circumcised in order to bring them into the Muslim fold. Finally, the place was desecrated by killing a cow on the spot and then the invaders left."

It is natural that the Hindus would feel helpless when they were attacked by Muslim mobs backed with all the resources of the State and very often led by the Kazi. Revolt against this State proselytization, although infrequent is not unknown. Bansidas, in the same book, gives the following account of retaliation:

"After having desecrated the place of worship, the Muslims under the leadership of the Kazi, were discussing the means of putting the whole Hindu village into flame. A strong contingent of Hindus, milkmen by caste, turned back.

They came prepared and attacked the Muslims. Most of the Muslim crowd melted away in the neighbouring jungles for fear of their lives. The Kazi named Mina was caught. He was bound hand and foot and blows were rained upon him. A goat's skin was tied round his neck and he was pushed round the place, people jeering behind him. Korans and other sacred Muslim books were burnt. His beard was pulled out and when he was let off, he was barely alive. The Hindus then had their bath and worshipped the Goddess Manasa with merriment."

Abduction of Hindu girls by force and marrying them against their wish was an effective weapon of terrorization in the hands of the Muslims. It had become widely prevalent in Bengal and it still remains a constant source of anxiety. Very often the Rulers themselves indulged in this vice and became a menace for the countryside. The criminally abducted girl was and even now is welcomed by the family of the Muslims. The womenfolk support the abductor and the entire Muslim Society protects him. The following story appearing in the *Shamser Ghazir Gan*, a historical work of mid-eighteenth century, states that such forcible seizures resulting in subsequent marriage was "desachar": i.e. an established custom.

"The Ghazi one day went a-hunting to the forest near Jaypur Mandia. One Manu Sarkar lived there. Sarkar had a beautiful daughter whom he had given in marriage to a Kulin Brahman of Mireswari. The girl with five companions had gone for bath in a neighbouring tank. The Ghazi took fancy on the beautiful young girl. He seized her just as a serpent catches a frog. Her companions cried aloud, her father and brother rushed to the spot but in vain. Ghazi came home and presented the captured girl to his wife and requested her to give her consent for marrying the girl saying—such marriages have now

become an established custom and there was no shame in it. The wife agreed on condition that she would be converted into Islam."

Sri Chaitanya turned a new page in the history of Hindu-Muslim conflict in Bengal. He evidently felt that the number of Muslims had become too large to admit of an attempt to exterminate them as Rajah Kans had tried to do. But he realized that State Killings, Communal riots and forcible conversions that were taking place threatened the very existence of Hinduism in Bengal and that something must be done to stop them. The Hindus were living in great terror and their religious practices had virtually been given up; they were afraid to worship their Gods and Goddesses in public. In Eastern Bengal, Hindu religious practice had practically been wiped out. The Kazis were all powerful in the land and the Hindus lived in mortal fear of them. Sri Chaitanya launched a movement which seems to have two objectives—to restore the morale of the Hindus and to stem the tide of Islamization by re-converting Muslims into Hindu fold. The rigidity that the Hindu Caste system had acquired by this time through an effort to contract itself into a shell that would stand the onslaughts of Islam, provided the greatest hindrance to his new move. He, therefore, revolted against the caste system and declared that in the eye of God all human beings were equal. The ground for receiving the proselyte was thus prepared.

In the *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, the life history of Sri Chaitanya, narrated by Krishnadas Kaviraj, one of his close associates, he is described as the lion-incarnation of Sri Krishna in Navadwip in the following manner: "The lion among men, Sri Chaitanya is born in Navadwip as an incarnation of Sri Krishna towards the close of the Kali Yuga. His neck had a lion's strength, his courage resem-

bled a lion's dash and his voice resounded like a lion's roar. Let that lion take his seat in the heart of hearts of every man and let a mad elephant be destroyed at his roar." Throughout the work, Sri Chaitanya has been compared to Baladev, the idol of strength and courage. Spiritual explanations of these passages have been given by his later biographers and commentators as representing the perpetual struggle between good and evil in man, but some chapters, specially Chap. 17 of Part I, depicting his early life, gives specific account which have great historical significance. Gadadhar Das, who broke the power of the awe-inspiring Kazis of his village Ariadaha in 24 Parganas and compelled them to recite the name of Hari, was one of his most favourite disciples. Sri Chaitanya went to East Bengal, specially Sylhet where Shah Jalal had played havoc, stayed there for a pretty long time and succeeded in effecting a revival of Hindu culture there. Like Navadwip, in East Bengal also he led Kirtan parties publicly and inspired others to do so. This mission of Sri Chaitanya may be compared with Mahatma Gandhi's Ramdhun in his Noakhali tour. While in East Bengal on his mission, Sri Chaitanya lost his wife. Sri Chaitanya has been described as the embodiment of strength and courage. One day he went out into the town with a club in his hand to teach the 'Pasandis' or Hindu haters a lesson. People fled on all sides at this sight. The fear of the people brought him into senses, he came quietly to the home of Srivas and threw away the club.

The public Kirtan introduced by Sri Chaitanya had a deep significance. The Hindus of the whole town of Navadwip had been inspired through incessant Kirtans and their fear of Muslims was much reduced. The Muslims became angry at this fresh outburst of Hinduism and complained to the Kazi. The Kazi was furious. He came to a place where Kirtan was being held, broke the Mridanga and told

the people. " So long nobody dared demonstrate openly the Hindu rites ; with whose backing have you now started it ? Do not have such Kirtan anywhere in the town any more. I pardon you to-day but if there is any repetitions of it, I shall confiscate the whole property of the offender and he will be converted into Islam." The Hindus got nervous and reported the matter to Sri Chaitanya. He told them not to loose courage.

One day he said, " Go, and have your Kirtan. I shall destroy the Muslims to-day." They went home and started Kirtan but not with an easy mind. Realizing that they were afraid at heart, Sri Chaitanya declared, " This evening I shall go out with a Kirtan party. Illuminate every house. Let me see what kazi comes and stops me."

At dusk, Sri Chaitanya went out with a large Kirtan party divided into three batches. The first batch included Haridas who was a Hindu convert from Islam. He was placed in the first batch because, the commentator says, the sight of him would infuriate the Muslims. In the second batch was Advaitacharyya who had converted Haridas into Hinduism. This was done because the Muslims would be still more angry to find Advaitacharyya after Haridas. Sri Chaitanya himself led the last batch.

This Kirtan party went round the whole town and finally arrived at the Kazi's house. Hindus shouted at him and made a tremendous noise. Sri Chaitanya did not stop them. Hearing the Kirtan and the shouts, the Kazi went into hiding in his house. Angry people damaged the Kazi's flower garden. This has been described in detail by Brindabandas in his *Chaitanya Mangal*. When the pandemonium subsided, Sri Chaitanya sat at the Kazi's door and sent some gentlefolk inside for asking him to come and see him. The Kazi came with his head bent in shame. Sri Chaitanya respectfully seated him by his side. Sri Chaitanya said

"I have come here as your guest. What custom is it that you hide at my sight?" The Kazi replied, "You have come here in a temper, so I had hid myself and waited till you were pacified. Now that you are in your own mood, I have come to see you." The Kazi then recounted his intimacy with Sri Chaitanya's maternal grandfather, claimed him as his uncle and said that "As social relation was truer than blood relation" he looked upon Sri Chaitanya as his own nephew. He excused him for his anger and wanted in his turn to be pardoned for his offence against the Hindus. They had a discourse on cow slaughter and Kazi admitted "your argument (against cow slaughter) is true. My scriptures cannot stand the scrutiny of reason at the present day. I know that my scriptures are imaginary, but have to obey them under social pressure."

The next portion of the narrative is even more revealing. It indicates that the Hindus had started a campaign of counter terrorization, short of killing, apparently within the knowledge of Sri Chaitanya. After the Kazi had admitted the inferiority of his scriptures, Sri Chaitanya laughed and asked him, "Well, you are the Kazi and you have every right to fight Hinduism. How is it, then, that the town has suddenly become so noisy with outbursts of Kirtan?" Kazi wanted to give the reply in private, but Sri Chaitanya assured him that persons about were intimate with him and the Kazi could frankly open his mind in their presence. Then the Kazi said, "One day I had broken a Mridanga and stopped Kirtan in a Hindu house. That night when I was in bed a lion with a human body jumped upon me, gnashed his teeth, made terrific shouts and said—'As you have stopped Kirtan in my praise and broken the Mridanga, I shall tear off your heart.' I shut my eyes and trembled. Finding me terribly afraid, the lion took pity on me and said—'I have come only to teach you a lesson. If you again

do so as you have done that day, I shall kill you with your entire family and destroy all the Muslims.' The lion then departed leaving me struck with terror. Look at the scratches he has made with his claw on my chest." The Kazi bared his chest and showed the scratches. The manner in which Sri Chaitanya humoured the Kazi to speak out the incident in the presence of a number of people makes the conclusion irresistible that the whole incident was stage managed and Sri Chaitanya had previous knowledge of it. The weakest spot in the Kazi's mind had already been touched and he continued, "I have not told anybody anything about this incident. That very day, one of my constables came and reported—'I had gone to stop a Kirtan. Suddenly a blast of fire swept over my face and my beard has all been burnt leaving scars on my face.' Whatever constable is sent to stop Kirtan, he comes back and reports the same incident. I was really afraid and said,—'Don't go out to stop Kirtan any more, keep indoors.' This is the reason why Hindus are having their Kirtans unmolested. The Muslims have complained to me about this outburst and have warned me that it would not be good for me if the Sultan had knowledge of this new state of affairs." Sri Chaitanya's warm behaviour had moved the Kazi into tears and he said, "Through your Grace, I now stand reformed and I pray to you to give me strength to maintain my faith unto you." Sri Chaitanya said, "Grant me one favour, do not prevent Kirtans in Nadia." Kazi replied, "Not only myself, but I shall make my descendants also swear that they would not prevent Kirtan." Sri Chaitanya then left the Kazi's place along with his followers.

## AMITY EFFORTS IN BENGAL

Efforts at an establishment of Hindu-Muslim goodwill were not unknown in Bengal as in other parts of Northern India. Instances of such efforts at mutual understanding are found best in the literary field. Alaol, a Muslim poet, translated the Hindi poem *Padmavat* of Malik Muhammad Jaisi, into Bengali and wrote general poems on Krishna and Radha in the 17th century. Dr. D. C. Sen notes<sup>1</sup> that "the manuscripts of *Padmavat* hitherto obtained, all belong to the border lands of Arakan in the backwoods of Chittagong, copied in Persian characters and preserved by the rural Muhammadan folk of these localities." This book contains, lengthy disquisitions on Theology and Sanskrit rhetoric; yet its author as well as the translator were both Muslims. From the time of Magana Thakur, the Muslim minister of the Arakan King, till the time of Sheikh Hamidullah of Chittagong who published it in 1893—covering a period of about 250 years this book was copied, read and admired by the Muslims of Chittagong exclusively. In Kshemendra's *Manasamangal* written towards the latter part of the 17th century, there is a passage, which tells us that in the steel-chamber prepared for Behula and Lakhinder, a copy of the Koran was kept along with other sacred charms to avert Manasa Devi's wrath.<sup>2</sup>

After Aurangzeb's death, the communal toleration increased as has always been the case after phases of severe persecution followed by bigot kings. By the middle of the 18th century, this toleration had so much advanced that

<sup>1</sup> D. C. Sen, History of Bengal Literature, 626.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 288, 793.

Sahamat Jang and Saulat Jang (nephews of Nawab Ali-vardi) once enjoyed the Holi festival, for seven days in the garden of Motijhil. This event has been narrated in the celebrated work *Muzaffarnama*. The author of the book was himself present on this occasion. On that occasion about 200 reservoirs had been filled with coloured water, and heaps of *abira* (red powder) and saffron had been collected ; and more than 500 charming girls, dressed in costly robes and jewels, used to appear in a body every morning and evening mustering from every part of the garden. After the Treaty of Alinagar, Nawab Sirajuddowlah proceeded to Murshidabad and enjoyed the Holi festival in his palace at Mansurganj<sup>2</sup>. Once when at Azimabad, Nawab Mir Jafar crossed the Ganges with all the gentry of the town and engaged himself in enjoying the Holi festival<sup>4</sup>. All the gentry of the city took part in the festival with Mir Jafar. In the *Seir-ul-Mutakkharin*<sup>5</sup> it is stated that "not content with that, he (Mir Jafar) ordered a sandy spot in the river, through which ran a small stream, to be surrounded by cloth-walls and there he spent some days, in fulfilling the rites of that Gento festival, the last of which consists in throwing handfuls of dust and coloured earth at each other and springing coloured water on one another's clothes." It is said that on his death bed, Mir Jafar drank a few drops of water poured in libation over the idol of Kiriteswari Devi. *Seir-ul-Mutakkharin*<sup>6</sup> says that "several persons of credit have affirmed that some moments before his demise, he had, on Nandacoomer's persuasion ordered to be brought to him some water that had been poured in libation over the idol at Kyirut-conah (a famous temple of the Gentoos in the neighbourhood of

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 1230.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 137a.

<sup>5</sup> *Seir-ul-Mutakkharin*, Tr. by Haji Mustaba, II, 266

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, II, 568.

Murshidabad) and that some drops of it were poured down the dying man's throat." Offering of *puja* in Hindu temples by Muslims and *sirni* at Muslim mosques by Hindus were not infrequent. D. C. Sen in his History of Bengali Language and Literature<sup>7</sup> states that "in Chittagong this fusion of ideas and interchange of customs and usages seem to have reached its highest point. In a Bengali poem called the *Behula Sundari*, written by Hamidullah of Chittagong, we read that the Brahmins who had assembled to find out an auspicious day for the hero's journey abroad, consulted the Koran for the purpose. The hero, who was the son of an orthodox Hindu merchant, obeyed the injunctions as they were laid down in the Vedas and started on his voyage, praying to Allah for his safety. Aptabuddin, another Muhammadan poet of Chittagong, who wrote a poem called *Jamil Dilaram* in 1750, writes that his hero, who was a Muhammadan, went to the nether world to seek a boon from the Saptarsies or the seven sages of the Hindus." Many of the Muslims believed in the principles of Hindu astrology and were as particular in observing them as the Hindus. Vaishnava thought had a deep influence on the mind of the ordinary Mussalman village folk. A number of works were composed by Muslim writers of 18th century in praise of Hindu Gods and Goddesses and on Hindu music. Dr. D. C. Sen in his article on *Bangabhasar upar Mussalmaner prabhav* (Influence of Muslim writers on Bengali language) in the Bengali monthly *Vichitra*, Magh 1335 B.S., writes, "In his work called *Padakalpataru*, composed in the 18th century, Vaishnavdas has quoted the padas (songs in praise of Vaishnava Gods) of eleven Muslim writers."

<sup>7</sup> p. 793.

## CONCLUSION

The occasional exuberance of toleration at ebb-tide periods of Islamisation has been looked upon as mutual efforts at an establishment of Hindu Muslim good will. Really speaking, the moves came generally from the Hindus. The Muslim response had been short-lived and always came with mental reservations. Men like Mian Abdullah, Akbar, Dara Shikoh, Hossain Shah, Jaisi and Alaol were very few and far between. They were mere exceptions and had no support either from the intellectuals or from the masses of their brothers-in-faith. The Arabs themselves had spent much time and energy in acquiring knowledge of Hindu theology and sciences. Alberuni produced Kapila's *Samkhya Darsan* and Patanjali's *Yoga Darsan* to his fellow-believers in good Arabic translations. Perhaps it was he who first introduced *Bhagavadgita* into the world of Muslim readers. As regards the *Puranas* Alberuni was perhaps the first Muslim who took up the study of them. He also translated Varahamihir's works—*Brihat Samhita* and *Laghujatakam*. Many important Sanskrit books on logic, philosophy, ethics, politics, science of war, astronomy, mathematics, astrology, medicine, pharmacology, veterinary art, snakes (sarpavidya), poison (visa vidya) etc. and a Life of Buddha were translated into Arabic. A favourite subject of the Arabs was Indian mathematics, the knowledge of which became far spread by the publications of Alkindi and many others.<sup>1</sup>

This intensive study of Hindu theology and sciences

<sup>1</sup> Alberuni's India, Sachau, I, xxxiv.

did not, however, bring about any softening of the Arab attitude towards the Hindu "infidel". Even Alberuni himself, who spent most of his life in this study, failed to rise above the traditional Islamic outlook. "He sometimes took the occasion of his study for pointing out the superiority of Islam over Brahmanic India. He contrasts the democratic equality of men with the castes of India, matrimonial law of the Islam with degraded forms of it in India, the cleanliness and decency of Muslims with the filthy customs of the Hindus."<sup>2</sup>

The Muslim masses having been local converts had much in common with the Hindus in social customs and economic life. Porter, in his Census Report of Bengal 1931, has given a number of instances of how Muslims in Bengal districts follow many of the Hindu social practices. Risley and Gait had, in 1901, also made similar study in detail. The most peculiar characteristic of these Muslim converts and their descendants is that as soon as a cry of "Islam in danger" is raised by their leaders and Mullahs, they lose not a moment in assembling under the banner of Islam. When action begins, they do not hesitate to attack even the very persons to whom they had been indebted for generations as neighbours. This mental feature had it vivid expression in the October '47 events of Noakhali. and this latent characteristic was anticipated by Nolan<sup>3</sup> who wrote in 1857 that "although the Indo-Muhammadans retain many of their Hindu castes and customs, they imbibe the fierce intolerance which they everywhere also exhibit and aspire to attain power as a religious duty by means no matter how repulsive and sanguinary." The sanguinary methods with which the entire body of Indo-Muslims, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, cultured and

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* I, xix.

<sup>3</sup> page 70, *ante.*

uncultured, established Pakistan and the unity of Muslim mind working behind the two nation theory of Mr. Jinnah can be explained against Nolan's observations recorded a century back. Unless the Muslim leaders as well as masses adopt the spirit and ideal of Mustafa Kemal in place of that advocated by Jinnah, Islamic politics will continue to remain enveloped in its present darkness.

The Hindus have always been exceedingly tolerant. This may best be illustrated by the following event in Indian history. The non-co-operation movement of 1920 was launched by Mahatma Gandhi as a national struggle for independence. Mustafa Kemal had, shortly before, effected a separation of mosque and politics in Turkey by abolishing the Khilafat. This move was probably the greatest single progressive event & the twentieth century. The Indian Muslims joined in the chorus of reactionary protest against Mustafa Kemal's move to lift Islamic states from their medieval darkness and to put them in line with other progressive states of the modern world. Mahatma Gandhi, in his eagerness to win Muslim goodwill, supported the retrograde demand and coupled the movement for the restoration of Khilafat with his struggle for Indian independence. Even Hindu women came out on the streets with Islam's battle cry of *Allah-ho-Akbar* on their tongue together with their own mantram—*Vandemataram*. This artificial goodwill was, however, short lived and died away in due course. We wonder if a similar instance of concession made for winning the heart of a recalcitrant minority has ever been made any where else at any time. Within twenty years of this event, the two nation theory was propounded at Lahore and hardly a dozen Muslims remained within the fold of the Congress. In the last general elections, the Muslim League fought with the single item of Pakistan on its Election Manifesto and swept the polls in all the

provinces with the exception of a few seats in the Frontier Province. This slight reverse was however completely made up in the plebiscite of 1947.

With the rise of Christian power after 1757, the Islamic theocracy in India had come to an end. With the political power gone out of Muslim hands, goodwill efforts became easier as a Sikander had no more power to burn down a Lardhan for having claimed equality for a Hindu and a Muslim in the eye of God. But just as the Hindu people had not taken their subjugation in the hands of Muslim Kings lying down and throughout the millennium strove to gain independence, the struggle was revived even with greater force under the Christian Kings. The British policy of *Divide et Impera* was introduced in the politics of India for the consolidation of Christian power.

It was fully realised that an organisation of Muslims on a religious basis would excellently serve the purpose. The Muslim League was formed at Dacca with British patronage and money. Separate electorates on a religious basis was introduced. A "favoured wife" policy was followed with a hint of placing her son on the throne. Communal riots again became almost a normal feature in Indian life. "Economic causes" of communal riots were advanced and the administration was often at the back of a particular section of the aggressor. Since the Constitution Act of 1919, the whole of India was divided into two groups—Muslim and non-Muslim. We wonder if Britain would have permitted herself, had there been a Constitution Act, to be divided into two groups—Catholic and non-Catholic, thus exalting the name of the minority and agreeing to efface the name of Protestantism.

The popular belief that communal riots, communal bitterness and communal rivalry have been introduced by Britain in India while Hindus and Muslims in this country

had been living for centuries side by side in perfect peace and amity, is thoroughly untenable and uncorroborated by history. This myth has been exploded in the foregoing pages. During the early part of the British Rule, Muslim history was deeply studied, the Persian Chronicles were translated into English and the working of the Muslim mind was closely analysed. Profited by this knowledge the British Imperialists evolved their Muslim policy as a historical sequence. They followed the general trend in Muslim mind and met with success. We magnified the few exceptions to enormous heights and heavily lost. The Muslim policy of the Indian National Congress has been defective from the very beginning because, instead of profiting from knowledge and experience, it had sought to go against history simply by ignoring it. The declaration of one of the Ali Brothers, during the peak period of communal goodwill of the non-co-operation and Khilafat days, that it would be the happiest day of his life had he succeeded in bringing Mahatma Gandhi into the fold of Islam, had given sufficient indication of Islamic psychology. Mustafa Kemal, at this very time, read history with open eyes, found the solution and modern Turkey was born.

Islamic psychology, Islamic democracy and Islamic economics are all integral parts of the religion of Islam. By the theory of its origin the Muslim State is a theocracy. Its true king is God. Earthly rulers are merely His agents, bound to enforce His law, as explained in the Koran and the Hadis, on all. Civil Law is completely subordinated to Religious Law and indeed merges its existence in the latter. The civil authorities exist solely for the purpose of spreading and enforcing the "true faith". "In such a State," Sir Jadunath Sarkar explains<sup>4</sup>, "infidelity is logically equivalent

<sup>4</sup> Sir J. N. Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb, III, 248-51.

to treason, because the infidel repudiates the authority of the true King and pays homage to his rivals, the false Gods and Goddesses. All the resources of the State, all the forces under the political authorities, are in strict legality at the disposal of the missionary propaganda of the true faith. Therefore, the toleration of any sect outside the orthodox Islam is no better than compounding with sin. And the worst form of sin is polytheism, the belief that the one true God has partners in the form of other deities. Such a belief is the rankest ingratitude (*Kufr*) to Him who gives us our life and daily bread. Islamic theology, therefore, tells the true believer that his highest duty is to make 'exertion (jehad) in the path of God' (Koran, ix, 29), by waging war on infidel lands (dar-ul-harb) till they become a part of the land of Islam (dar-ul-Islam) and their populations are converted into true believers. After conquest the entire infidel population becomes theoretically reduced to the status of slaves of the conquering army. The men taken with arms are to be slain or sold into slavery and their wives and children reduced to servitude. As for the non-combatants amongst the vanquished, if they are not massacred outright,—as the Canon lawyer Shafi declares to be the Quranic injunction,—it is only to give them a respite till they are so closely guided as to accept the true faith.

"The conversion of the entire population to Islam and the extinction of every form of dissent, is the ideal of the Muslim State. If any infidel is suffered to exist in the community, it is as a necessary evil, and for a transitional period only. Political and social disabilities must be imposed on him, and bribes offered to him from the public funds, to hasten the day of his spiritual enlightenment and the addition of his name to the roll of the true believers. The growth of the infidel population in number or wealth would, therefore, defeat the very end of the State.

"A non-Muslim therefore, cannot be a citizen of the State; he is a member of a depressed class; his status is a modified form of slavery. He lives under a contract (zimma) with the State, for the life and property that are grudgingly spared to him by the Commander of the faithful he must undergo political and social disabilities and pay a commutation money (jizya). In short, his continued existence in the State after the conquest of his country by the Muslim is conditional upon his person and property being made subservient to the cause of Islam."

Encyclopaedia of Islam also states<sup>2</sup>, "Nor in the exercise of their worship may they (the zimmis) use an offensive publicity. They are not citizens of the Muslim State."

The Hindu policy in Pakistan can be understood only against this background.

The murder of infidels (*Kafir-kush*) is counted as a merit in a Muslim. It is not necessary that he should tame his own passions or mortify his flesh, it is not necessary for him to attain the height of spirituality. He has only to slay a certain class of his fellow-beings or plunder their lands and wealth, and this act in itself would raise his soul to heaven. When in 1910, Boutros Pasha was murdered by an Egyptian Muslim for no personal provocation but for the political reason that he had presided over the court that sentenced the Denshawai villagers and the guilt of the murderer was conclusively proved by evidence, the Chief Kazi of Egypt pronounced the judgement that according to Islam it is no crime for a Muslim to slay an unbeliever. This is the opinion held by the highest exponent of Islamic law in a modern civilized country. "And when the sacred months are passed, kill those who join other deities with God, wher-

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopaedia of Islam, I, 969.

ever ye shall find them. But if they shall convert,.... then let them go their way" (*Koran*, ix, 5, 6). Sir Jadunath Sarkar says<sup>6</sup>, "A religion whose followers are taught to regard robbery and murder as a religious duty, is incompatible with the progress of mankind or with the peace of the world."

The present short study of Indo-Muslim relations may be concluded with the remarks of that widely travelled and profound modern philosopher Keiserling, who writes in his *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, "Islam is a religion of absolute surrender and submissiveness to God—but to a God of a certain character—a War-Lord who is entitled to do with us as he will and who bids us stand even in line of battle against the foe. The ritual of this belief embodies the idea of discipline. When the true believers every day at fixed hours perform their prayers in serried ranks in the mosque, all going through the same gestures at the same moment, this is not, as in Hinduism, done as a method of self-realization, but in the spirit in which the Prussian soldier defiled before his Kaiser. This military basis of Islam explains all the essential virtues of the Mussalman. It also explains his fundamental defects—his unprogressiveness, his incapacity to adapt himself, his lack of initiative and invention. The soldier has simply to obey orders. All the rest is the affair of Allah."

<sup>6</sup> Sir J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, III, 257.

